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JANUARY 1999
NUMBER 89

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Virgin Power

I wish to express my profound joy at having read Sarah E. Hinlicky's article "Subversive Virginity" (October 1998). Not only is it sparklingly written and lucidly argued, but its mere presence in print is a rare statement of moral support for those of us who had begun to fear that we were alone in the cultural universe.

I am a male virgin, two years Ms. Hinlicky's senior, who has found that his virginity makes him an involuntary participant in the fiercest firefight of the culture war: the sexual counterrevolution. Battered but unbroken, I can attest to the tremendous adversity virgins face. This adversity comes partly from one's own libido amidst a sex-saturated culture, but largely from the discouragement that comes of wondering whether one's sacrifice will ever be rewarded in the bonds of a just and enduring marriage.

To Ms. Hinlicky's elaboration of the adverse consequences abandoned virginity has upon subsequent intimacy, I wish to add that such abandonment has a considerable social impact as well. At its root, of course, to abandon one's virginity is to surrender to selfish desires and to the spurious logic of empowering self-gratification. Yet such surrender is the compromise that keeps on compromising.

Against this process of moral decay, a virgin stands for the truth about human sexuality by refusing to misuse it. This is, as Ms. Hinlicky notes, a source of great strength for both sexes. It is also the cause of great resentment from those who have been consumed by the need to rationalize their sexual errancy. The corrosive ridicule and malignant example of such individuals can be quite intimidating. Seeing the squalor of their lives, however, strengthens one's resolve to love better. So, too, does Ms. Hinlicky's fine article.

Whitney R. Jacobs
Santa Fe, NM

Could you kindly convey to Ms. Hinlicky a marriage proposal from myself?

Well, wait a minute, now. It just occurred to me that I'd better ask my wife about this first.

Actually, my appreciation for Ms. Hinlicky's intriguing piece lies here: I have two young daughters, and I have a vision. I envision for my daughters, and my son as well, an ethic that rises above the concept that the essence of morality is obeying commandments. That mentality is compelling only to a person who enshrouds the nature of a robot in piety, a person whose virtue extends only to the inflexibility of doing what they're told to do.

In light of the New Testament, a Christian ethic must be based on doing what makes sense given divine ethical guidelines that we've embedded in our inmost being, guidelines that emerge from the full range of scriptural content and that are honed by the full range of human experience and the insights of the Christian community. Ms. Hinlicky has provided such a rationale for virginity—nonsystematic but compelling.

Philip Bitar
Arlington, WA

Although Sarah E. Hinlicky's parade of her own virginity surely reached an audience in need of encouragement to follow in her path, it strikingly misinformed a much wider audience.

Ms. Hinlicky flippantly states, "Of course, virginity is a battle against sexual temptation, and popular culture always opts for the easy way out instead of the character-building struggle. The result is superficial women formed by meaningless choices, worthy of stereotype, rather than laudable women of character, worthy of respect."

Ms. Hinlicky is a twenty-two-year-old virgin, but it does not necessarily follow that she is a laudable

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woman of character, nor does it automatically make her worthy of respect.

On the other hand, I am a twenty-five-year-old, never-married non-virgin. When I was twenty-two, I was not a virgin. When I was fifteen, I was not a virgin. It does not necessarily follow that I'm superficial or worthy of stereotype.

Premarital sex does not make you superficial. It does not make you unrespectable. It makes you a sinner. The good news is that everybody you know is a sinner—every Christian you know is a sinner. If we weren't, Christ would be out of a job. Accept that you are, pray about it, and then go to work on yourself. Jesus didn't assign labels. He talked to people and listened to them. He didn't say, "You superficial stereotypical people, you are weak in character and have taken the easy way out." What he did say time and time again was, "Go and sin no more."

Anne Botkin
Yellowstone National Park

Kudos to Sarah E. Hinlicky for the confidence and clarity with which she makes the case for abstinence as empowerment. One can't help wishing this essay had been published in a forum where it would be more likely to make waves among the readership—or more likely to reach the countless young women who will find out the hard way that promiscuity is a game won primarily by eager, callous men. At the least, it may speak to those who have come to believe that "the battle about sex is over" and that the Church should abandon its calls to a more demanding ethical standard. Such a surrender would accept as casualties the women who (like Ms. Hinlicky's friends and mine) see no way to fulfill their sexuality save through a social system that leaves them vulnerable to male duplicity and appetite.

Joel Hafvenstein
San Diego, CA

Theology and Design

In his article "Science and Design" (October 1998) William A. Dembski discusses SETI research (the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) as an example of the search for design. He makes a good case, but I would like to point out a bit of irony here. It is no secret that most SETI advocates are also anti-theists (not just nontheists); one of the most vocal SETI advocates of recent years was the late Carl Sagan, whose hostility towards Christianity is well known. Other indications of their atheistic leanings can be gleaned from recent literature published by the SETI Institute.

Atheists strongly believe they must support SETI, because the discovery of other intelligent beings in the Milky Way would show once and for all that we are not special in any way—it would be the crowning capstone on the Principle of Mediocrity. It is only a small step, then, to discredit the Judeo-Christian worldview (so they believe). Furthermore, extraterrestrials are the perfect God-substitute: they will cure all our diseases with their advanced medical knowledge, they will solve all our social problems as they have presumably done on their worlds, and they are super-intelligent and apparently omnipotent—clearly qualities worthy of worship. So it is ironic that SETI research is one of the best examples of the search for design by scientists. Just replace the word extraterrestrial with God, and the SETI goals would read the same: the search for evidence of purposeful communication from a being capable of abstract thought.

Guillermo Gonzalez
Seattle, WA
The writer is a postdoctoral research astronomer at the University of Washington.

What disturbs me about articles like "Science and Design" is what we get when we accept such contentions: an ingenious deity who concocted intricate protein-creating machinery long ago, and then took a hike and has never been heard from since. Maybe I've missed the subtleties, but this seems worse than no god at all.

J. G. Owen
Huntington, NY

Proponents of design for science may be prepared to consider that many a self-proclaimed agnostic (or atheist) can be quite cognizant that the universe indeed exhibits signs easily interpreted as evidence for design. Believers even purport to know the Designer (Psalm 19:8) with Christian credal formulas proclaiming God's creating and sustaining presence, concerned for an unfolding future. In this sense, God is properly acknowledged as the explanation of everything.

In sharp contrast, any attempt to utilize God as a scientific explanation of anything only provokes serious consequences for theology and science. Theology: Trying to identify God as Designer violates His kinetic presence while presuming, idolatrously, to set bounds to His activity in conformity with scientific knowledge. Cheap faith is more serious still. Interposing science to validate the Designer behind the design converts blessed assurance into an assurance merely from the human side in mockery of costly faith (Hebrews 11:3, John 20:29).

Science: Natural science eschews using ad hoc hypotheses masquerading as explanatory principles. A possible post ad hoc agenda is far more serious. One particularly virulent alternative to natural science, advocated under the benign appellation "theistic science," would seek to replace the operational and alleged metaphysical foundations of science, assessed as irremediably hard-core atheism, in favor of theism. Without due caution the design hypothesis offered by William A. Dembski could be misused as a stalking horse for radically subverting the legitimate realm of natural science. If successful, any "theistic science" of this nature would a fortiori be subject to the theological consequences above. The ensuing serious rupture within the scientific community would tragically highlight the gulf between belief and unbelief. No fur-

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ther court of appeal could adjudicate terms of legitimization for this pitiful zero-sum conflict. Sadly many a scientist would be deprived of the special "head start" which science can providentially provide, disposing minds and hearts to "see."

In contrast, absent such intrusive theistic spin, nonbelievers are left to ponder the signs of design anew in freedom to accept the gift of faith.

Thaddeus J. Trenn
Victoria College
University of Toronto

William A. Dembski replies:
In response to Guillermo Gonzalez: The SETI program illustrates how scientists look for design. Design could conceivably be evident in the radio signals from outer space. No conclusive signals pointing to an extraterrestrial intelligence, however, have yet to be observed. On the other hand, design is overwhelmingly evident in complex information-rich biological systems. Professor Gonzalez' concern that design might bolster an antitheistic SETI program is therefore unfounded. The SETI program has thus far failed to find conclusive evidence of design. Moreover, even if it succeeds in discovering intelligent extraterrestrials, it will do so using the same methodology we use to discover design in biology—and biological design certainly has theistic implications.

To J. G. Owen, I would respond by asking: How does "an ingenious deity who concocted intricate protein-creating machinery long ago" preclude that same deity from (1) still creating today, (2) sustaining the world continually, (3) acting in the world today, and (4) sending His Son to redeem humanity? There is absolutely nothing in the intelligent design program that requires a deistic conception of God.

Finally, to Thaddeus J. Trenn: Intelligent design is first of all a scientific research program. Whether intelligent design has theological implications and whether those implications are inimical to certain strands of theology are secondary considerations. Mr. Trenn supposes that reinstating design within science would force us to make unacceptable claims about God. But if that is a danger, then deliberately refusing design from science would similarly force us to make unacceptable claims about God (e.g., in the absence of design, God appears a ruthless deity who uses natural selection to root out the weak and reward the strong). Reinstating design and refusing design both have theological implications that will be acceptable to some and not to others.

Intelligent design has no business trying to please the theological community. Its business is uncovering the design in nature. If that design is present and empirically verifiable, then theologians will have to make their peace with it (much as they've made their peace with Darwinism). Mr. Trenn worries that reinstating design within science will incur dangerous pitfalls. The far bigger pitfall is to exclude design from science because of theological worries.

In Defense of World Relief

Richard John Neuhaus' comment on *World* magazine's March 28, 1998 article about World Relief (While We're At It, October 1998) transmitted a misleading implication and, in the process, turned it (inadvertently of course) into a positive libel. The key passage is this sentence: "More than 60 percent of the agency's overseas funding comes from Washington, and it is very much part of the Clinton Administration's policy of supporting the coercive sterilization of hundreds of thousands of women in Latin America and elsewhere, says *World*."

In fact, *World* doesn't quite say that World Relief supports forced sterilization. It merely leaves that to be inferred. The article draws a series of links, most of them dubious or utterly imaginary, between World Relief and agencies or governments that do support forced sterilization. It is a "Six Degrees of Separation" game, by which any organization can be proved guilty by association (however distant an association) with some other pernicious organization. For instance, the Ministry of Health in Honduras apparently does encourage some women to have their tubes tied (though there is no evidence of coercion, as far as I know). It is also true that World Relief, in its Child Survival program, works with the Honduran Ministry of Health. Indeed, it would be absurd for them to refuse to cooperate with the Ministry, and thereby allow more children to get sick or die, because of disagreement over the issue of voluntary tubal ligations. Yet *World* uses that very cooperation as a stick with which to beat an agency that has done untold good for poor and sick people all over the world, and done it through the Church and in the name of Jesus Christ.

The same kind of game could be played in order to discredit FIRST THINGS or Wheaton College. It is a foul and unethical game, but one regularly played by *World*, a magazine that ceaselessly congratulates itself on its commitment to "prophetic journalism." What, pray tell, is prophetic journalism? Apparently it is the belief that journalists who claim to speak in the name of Christ need not bother with such tiresome procedures as, say, conforming their claims to the available evidence or checking the reliability of their sources. I agree with most of the editorial positions taken by *World*, but the journal's ethics are those of the tabloids rather than the Gospels.

I know quite a lot about World Relief because my wife has worked for the agency for more than a decade, and I can assure you that if anyone at World Relief supported coerced sterilizations, or even recommended or encouraged sterilization to poor women, she would have resigned in protest long ago. That goes for everyone I know who works at the agency. And my wife's convictions on this point are buttressed by her visits to World Relief program sites in Guatemala, Hon-

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duras, and El Salvador.

Alan Jacobs
Department of English
Wheaton College
Wheaton, IL

Christians, Atheists, and Truth

Regarding "Encountered by the Truth" (Public Square, October 1998), I read with chagrin the statement, "If Christians exhibited more intellectual patience, modesty, curiosity, and sense of adventure, there would be fewer atheists in the world." Really. Sounds like we've now granted victim status to all the unbelievers whose encounter with truth is spoiled by "the pretension of Christians to know more than we do."

Certainly we must guard against putting God in a box. We all have "*a* standpoint" while we grope toward "*the* standpoint." Indeed, our knowledge is partial (1 Corinthians 13:9). But I wonder how St. Paul would have reacted had he been advised to be modest in his affirmations of truth, stay curious, and always approach theology with a sense of adventure, being careful never to offend his listeners, lest he turn them into atheists.

Even though truth is not entirely objective, Christian truth, mediated by the Word, the Sacraments, and the teachings of the Church, is objective enough to bite into and will take a chunk out of your soul, if you're serious about it. Oh, to be an atheist and do nothing but deconstruct!

(The Rev.) Brad McIntyre
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Suamico, WI

Pro-Life or Pro-Death?

Regarding Richard John Neuhaus' description of Governor George W. Bush as not being "the new Pro-Life Hope" (While We're At It, October 1998), the good Father could not be more on point. Right now, the man described by some as "the new Pro-Life Hope" has approved the construction of a larger death chamber that will apparently include stadium-style seating so that executions can be viewed in all the unobstructed comfort of a modern movie theater. Governor Bush may be anti-abortion but he is not pro-life. Instead, he is just another politician pandering to the American culture of death and obsession with revenge.

Mark L. Chance
Houston, TX

Corruption, Large and Small

In the October 1998 issue (While We're At It), Richard John Neuhaus again picks up on Monsignor George Higgins and uses the technique known as "damning with faint praise." I hope it is not true that Msgr. Higgins is the last of a long line of labor priests. But to inflict on him a reproach about the corruption in the unions reveals a deficient understanding of Christian teaching. Which particular human institution does Father Neuhaus propose as one that is not corrupt?

The millions of dollars that he notes as diverted from union funds is chicken feed compared to the billions with which entrepreneurial capitalism has bribed its way around the world. It preaches the sanctity of the bottom line and the inviolability of executive salaries. It includes in this concoction a nasty combination of low wages for stupefying work, long hours, and dangerous working conditions. The lure of mere money has corrupted the quality of our manufactures and the standards of our professions. What is the median income of doctors? Does anyone know a poor lawyer? An impoverished landlord? A starving CEO? Would a lawyer do a garbageman's work for a lawyer's salary? Would he do his lawyering for a garbageman's salary?

Fr. Neuhaus notes the growth in the unions of government employees. Might it be that these employees, observing the goings-on among the wealthy, are simply emulating those organizations? What is the moral difference between a union and a bar association or medical association? Which, in our times, is more corrupt?

Dorothy L. Sayers noted that a man whose work is not closely tied to physical labor, not closely tied to the physical things of the created world in which he has been placed, quickly goes corrupt. We are not

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equally honest and dishonest. We were created honest. It's the temptation to dishonesty that we have to fight against. As between the little dishonesty in the unions and the greater dishonesty in corporate organizations with their bought lawyers ever at hand to find excuses, surely the unions have the edge. Leastways, that's what it says in our handy guidebook: it is better for us to be poor than rich.

Gabriel Austin
New York, NY

RJN replies:
While readily allowing that corruption is generously distributed through all human institutions, I was only suggesting that Msgr. Higgins might be somewhat more even-handed in his criticism. If by "our handy guidebook" Mr. Austin means the Bible, I'm not sure it says anything about unions, but information from other sources suggests that government employee unions generally have little to do with physical labor, and makes it hard to believe that there is much of a resemblance between union leadership and "the poor." With what may be left of Mr. Austin's point, I warmly agree.

About Equality

Richard John Neuhaus takes Michael Walzer to task for lamenting the growing economic inequality in America (While We're At It, October 1998). Walzer, he says, is guilty of "an ideological fixation on equality," which implies the "political mobilization of the vice of envy." Such a glib dismissal of the claims of social justice—ignoring Catholic teaching in *Laborem Exercens* and *Solicitudo Rei Socialis* and truncating *Centesimus Annus*—demands a response.

That a growing gap between rich and poor is a social danger is not a modern egalitarian doctrine; it was well known to both Plato and Aristotle. Walzer himself is no simple-minded egalitarian, but an advocate of a doctrine of "complex equality" respectful of the requirements of communal life. And, in an item on the very next page, Fr. Neuhaus aptly criticizes the fallacy involved in arguing that inequality is not "per se" the cause of the woes of the poor. In any case, equality is part of the American political tradition FIRST THINGS affirms—however we handle the resulting trade-off with liberty and community.

Political mobilization for equality can bring unpleasant things to the surface; but so can mobilization against abortion, for school choice, and for many other causes favored by FIRST THINGS. The same is true of the theologico-political warfare (or "struggle for orthodoxy") waged by Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz and his allies—to which FIRST THINGS is prepared to give a benign reading. Nonetheless, some fights need to be fought, and the politics of rich and poor smells better than the pornographic politics that now reigns in Washington.

Philip E. Devine
Department of Philosophy
Providence College
Providence, RI

RJN replies:
First, *economic* equality is entrenched in the tradition of the left in America (and elsewhere), and I am not aware that FT affirms that. Second, it is the declared purpose of some ideologists to agitate discontent over an alleged "growing gap between rich and poor," turning it into a "social danger" that can be exploited for political purposes. In thinking about the problem of poverty, "doctrine" should be checked by facts. The claim of Mr. Walzer and many others that in America "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" is simply not true. The great majority of the thirty million Americans who are said to be "living in poverty" are in fact much better housed and fed and own more personal property than did "average" Americans twenty-five years ago. Removing ideological blinders enables us to see more clearly the problem of a relatively small population that is truly poor, not because of inequality but because they are not, in the language of *Centesimus Annus*, included in the circle of productivity and exchange. Third, we should not have to choose between the malodorous qualities of the politics of envy and resentment and the politics of pornography and perjury, although we may note that the occasion for the latter is at least not an ideological fabrication.

Oops

I note Richard John Neuhaus' discussion (While We're At It, October 1998) of Governor George Bush and "other possible [pro-life] candidates such as Steve Forbes and John Ashbrook." Boy, does that take me back. The first presidential vote I ever cast was for Ashbrook in the Tennessee Republican primary of 1972. (Alas, I was one of the gallant few who did so.) Somewhere in a desk drawer, my Ashbrook button (with its bold no-left-turn design) still rests.

Among his other virtues, Congressman Ashbrook was indeed a redoubtable champion of the unborn. As a presidential candidate in 1972, he had the disadvantage of opposing a popular incumbent President with the unqualified support of the party organization. As a presidential candidate in 2000, he would have the somewhat greater disadvantage of having died in 1982.

Now I readily admit that, dead or alive, John Ashbrook would be far better than what we have now. But I can't help suspecting that maybe, just maybe, you were thinking of Senator John Ashcroft.

C. H. Ross
Nashville, TN

RJN replies:
Would you believe that we have at least five pairs of eyes go over every line, every word? At times like this, I wonder.

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THIS TIME

Punishment Yes, Impeachment No

James Nuechterlein

It is now (I write shortly before Thanksgiving Day) virtually certain that Bill Clinton will not be removed from office. And, however reluctantly, I find myself in agreement with those who argue that the impeachment process should not go forward.

Consider, first, where we are. According to every poll, the American people overwhelmingly oppose impeachment, and the situation in Congress—Republican majorities in both Houses notwithstanding—inevitably reflects the weight of opinion. If the House Judiciary Committee forwards articles of impeachment, it is far from certain that the whole House will approve them, and if it does it will be on party lines and by the narrowest of margins. In any case, the Senate will certainly not muster the two-thirds majority needed to convict. That being the case, it makes no sense for GOP leaders in Congress to continue a process that will hurt the party, divide the country, and cannot succeed in any event. The path of prudence for the Republicans is to come to an agreement with the White House on the severest form of punishment possible short of impeachment.

A number of people whose opinion I respect oppose that argument on principle. The President, they say, has violated his oath of office to faithfully execute the laws of the nation. He has without doubt committed perjury and almost without doubt obstructed justice. He is therefore guilty of the "high crimes and misdemeanors" that constitutionally require his removal from the presidency. To allow him to remain in office unchallenged would do grave damage to the rule of law and to the political and moral health of the nation.

Talk of striking a deal, this argument continues, is, at the very least, premature. There may in any case be no deal available. People speak of censure, but the Constitution provides no basis for Congress to censure the President. Any such action would likely violate the provision in Article I, Section 9 forbidding bills of attainder. Even if censure is constitutionally permissible, it would set a bad precedent for future relations between Congress and the President. We are likely faced with a situation, therefore, of impeachment or nothing. Let the process run its course. If impeachment fails, it fails. Congress will have followed its political and moral duty, and those responsible for letting the President go unpunished will have to answer to the nation and to history for the consequences of their actions.

There is much to be said for this argument. In taking with grave seriousness Clinton's offenses, it answers the sophistries of the President's defenders. They insist that this whole matter is simply about sex between consenting adults and in a more sophisticated society would have remained a private matter unworthy of note except among the morally unenlightened. To which the necessary response is, first, gratitude that most Americans, while conceding any individual's ordinary right to privacy, remain unsophisticated enough not to be indifferent to flagrant adultery once it becomes public; and, second, recognition that the matter became public because of the President himself.

Here we enter on the role of Kenneth Starr. Defenders of the President have portrayed him as a sex-obsessed ideological zealot determined to bring down the President at any cost. But it seems clear that the independent counsel ventured into Clinton's private life—with, it must be emphasized, the approval of the Justice Department and the court overseeing his investigation—only as it became entangled with very public matters of lying under oath and obstructing justice. President Clinton is in trouble today not because he had sex but because he lied about it and tried illegally to cover it up.

The smearing of Kenneth Starr attendant on the White House's scorched-earth defense of the indefensible has been morally odious. It is true that, under the Independent Counsel Act, Starr has dangerously broad and virtually unanswerable powers, but that is the fault of the Act itself—which, it should be noted, was first passed by a Democratic Congress and renewed at the insistence of the Clinton Administration.

Given all this, why oppose impeachment? For the simple and overwhelming reason that the American people are not ready for it, and their opinion on this matter must be attended to. They believe, rightly or wrongly, that the President's infractions of the law do not rise to the level of impeachable offenses. The law, of course, ought not be determined by public opinion, but impeachment is not simply a legal matter. It is both legal and political in nature. The rule of law requires that the President be punished; it does not require that he be removed from office.

The exercise of prudential political judgment is not merely appropriate here, it is essential. The American people do not want the impeachment or forced resignation of Bill Clinton. Under present circumstances, they would view his departure from office not as justice accomplished but as the

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illegitimate product of an obsessive partisan vendetta. The political climate of the nation would be poisoned for decades to come.

Many conservative commentators have expressed puzzled dismay at the public's failure to rise up in wrath over the President's behavior. Where, they wonder, is the outrage? But perhaps the public is wiser and more discriminating in its judgments than this view suggests. To begin with, the constitutional argument that the President's offenses require impeachment, while plausible, is not open-and-shut. A case can be made that the Founders intended impeachment for only those kinds of presidential wrongdoing that occur in the exercise of his official duties and not, as in this case, over matters related to his private life.

Nor do the President's continued high approval ratings presumptively indicate public indifference to his moral shortcomings. The same polls that show his high popularity *as President* record the public's low estimate of his moral standards. To borrow from the classic *1066 and All That,* the American people view Bill Clinton as a good king but a bad man. In an ideal world, of course, we would have a good king who is also a good man, but we seldom enjoy the luxury of ideal times. Things in general are going well in America, and the public inevitably, if not necessarily correctly, attributes much of our present prosperity and sense of well-being to the President's policies. Their Burkean disinclination to risk radical upheaval in non-radical circumstances deserves more respectful consideration from conservative intellectuals than it is currently receiving.

This is not to buy into the argument of many Clinton defenders that moral leadership is no part of a President's duties. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that Clinton's behavior has brought disgrace not just on himself, but on his office and his country. We are lessened by our apparently unavoidable acquiescence in his shamelessness, and one wishes that the American people would experience more uneasiness over that than they apparently do. Their cynical—if too often correct—populist assumption that all politicians are knaves or fools exacts a high cost in standards of civic decency. President Clinton ought not be forced to resign, but if he were a man of honor he would long since have resigned voluntarily. But he is not such a man, and we are stuck with him.

How make the best of that bad bargain? By shaming and punishing him as severely as circumstances allow. The constitutional impediments to censure are not necessarily insurmountable. And concern over precedent, while proper, should not override other considerations. These are—or so one fervently hopes—unique circumstances. The public's current indulgent mood might tempt the President to try to avoid punishment altogether, but a reminder of the possibility of indictment after he leaves office should concentrate his mind. The public wants him retained in office, but not let off scot-free.

Perhaps a bad bargain is the most a nation that twice elected so transparently hollow a man as Bill Clinton deserves. A few years after David Dinkins unseated Ed Koch as mayor of New York, a reporter asked Koch if, given the subsequent disillusionment with Dinkins, he would try to regain the office. "No," quipped Koch, "the people voted me out and the people must be punished." Well, the people voted Bill Clinton in, and for that too, it seems, the people must be punished. FT

The Winter Orchard

Say, my love, this world is whole:
a windfall here beneath the bole.
Or hold, my love, love's time is now:
a flourish, then the fruit along the bough.

But O, my love, how hard to hold
bare thoughts of love in winter's cold.
The apple limbs are bent and gray.
My love, O Christ, my love is far away.

—J. Bottum

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Opinion

Becoming Catholic: Making It Hard

Jennifer Mehl Ferrara

In its section on music, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* quotes St. Augustine: "How I wept, deeply moved by your hymns, songs, and the voices that echoed through your Church! What emotion I experienced in them! Those sounds flowed into my ears, distilling the truth in my heart. A feeling of devotion surged within me, and tears streamed down my face—tears that did me good." As a former Lutheran pastor who is now Roman Catholic, I am sorry to say Augustine's wonderful words do not describe my experience with worship in the Church. Though at times I have been on the verge of tears, that was due to feelings of despair and not devotion. Far from drawing me into the Church, the manner in which the Mass is celebrated in most parishes constituted, in the end, the greatest stumbling block to my conversion.

My trek to Rome began in earnest the day I read in *Lutheran Forum* Pastor Leonard Klein's condemnation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's practice of funding abortions: "Real churches do not kill babies." Prior to this point, I had never seriously considered becoming Roman Catholic. After all, I was a fourth-generation Lutheran pastor—happy to be a pastor and steeped in the traditions, theology, and ethos of Lutheranism.

Yet, as I read Klein's editorial, I was like a person coming to terms with the terminal illness of a loved one: I saw that my church body had fallen captive to "the culture of death" and that I had no choice but to leave. I had for some time ceased to view Lutheranism as a necessary "corrective" to Catholicism and, for years, had viewed the Roman Catholic Magisterium, and especially this Pope, as the keeper of the faith for all of Christendom. Therefore, for me, the only true option was to become Roman Catholic.

I began to read—papal encyclicals, Vatican II documents, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, theologians such as Louis Bouyer, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. I conversed with other Protestant pastors who had become Catholic and with priests who had grown up in the faith—all were eager evangelizers. The more I read and talked, the more convinced I became of the truth of the Catholic Church's teachings and doctrine.

I had now arrived at the doorstep of *Lumen Gentium* 14: "Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by God through Jesus Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in her could not be saved." Even if I was willing to take a chance with my own soul, I had three small children to consider and that concentrates the mind. At this stage, I was a reluctant convert still wrestling with giving up my ordination, but I took comfort in C. S. Lewis' insight: "The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation." God's compulsion was operating through my conscience and driving me into the arms of the Church. I now set out with hopes of experiencing the teachings and beliefs of the Church through Catholic worship—the Truth made manifest, if you will.

The first thing I noticed upon entering the lobby of our local Catholic parish, St. Mary's, was the absence of a coat rack. Catholics, unlike Lutherans, worship with their coats on, which gives the impression they are making an obligatory pit stop. After Mass, most do not linger to talk but instead race to be the first out of the parking lot. Obviously, becoming Catholic was going to require a few adjustments, including giving up that Protestant feeling of belonging to a close-knit community.

The sanctuary of St. Mary's is devoid of statues, and the pews are arranged in a semi-circle. We chose to sit in the side pews, and I soon discovered the problem with this configuration: I spent most of Mass staring at the parishioners across from me—observing their dress, their mannerisms, their parenting skills. This became an especially great temptation during the homily, which lasted twenty minutes and was delivered without manuscript or notes. My father, who for part of his career taught homiletics, warned me: "If you are going to preach without a manuscript, you actually have to be much better prepared." Many priests don't seem to know that rule.

I might have put up with the preaching, but the music was another matter altogether. This parish had well over a thousand members, so I could not understand why it did not have a choir. Instead, we were led in song by a large, well-dressed, perfectly coifed woman who stood at the lectern and sang with great emotion off-key into a microphone. The alternative to the song leader was the intensely earnest folk group with their three guitar chords. My first call as a pastor had been to a small rural parish with an average attendance of ninety and a choir of five. It bog-

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gled my mind to think the music and singing in that parish was superior to what I was now experiencing.

One Sunday, after singing the words to "Here I Am Lord" (*I, the Lord of sea and sky. . . . My hand shall save. . . .*), I turned to my husband and said, "Why are we always pretending to be God in these contemporary Catholic hymns? It strikes me as a bit presumptuous." I then began to notice the inordinate number of references to "I," "me," and "my" in the hymns I was being asked to sing. (As I later read in Thomas Day's *Why Catholics Can't Sing*, the music "oozes with an indecent narcissism.") Before long, I was standing arms crossed refusing to sing at all.

One day, while I was driving with my five-year-old son, a piece by Bach came over the car radio. "Mommy," my son said, "This is Mr. Bach. We listen to his music in church. I mean we used to listen to him in our old [Lutheran] church. Mommy, can we go back to Mr. Bach's church?" I know Bach is not the be-all and end-all of the worship experience; nevertheless, my husband and I decided we could not attend a parish that undermined our attempts to instill in our children a love of the great liturgical and musical traditions of the Church.

Next stop, St. Catherine's. Here, I experienced the mega-church, Catholic style. St. Catherine's has an excellent organist and a large choir, but they sing the exact same music as St. Mary's, only it is more annoying because the better the performance, the more schmaltzy the music sounds. The monsignor at St. Catherine's is a genuinely nice guy, and his liturgies reflect that fact. The sanctuary, which is really a big brightly lit auditorium, is perfectly designed to draw attention to him at all times. We did not last long at St. Catherine's. After visiting several other parishes, I began to despair of ever finding a satisfactory place of worship.

By now the darkness in my soul was hardening into cynicism as I contemplated the irony and just plain absurdity of my situation: who would have thought my problem with Roman Catholicism would be its seeming lack of reverence for tradition? I now wondered if the people leading and participating in Catholic worship actually believed what the Church taught. The informality and anthropocentricity of religious folk music help create an atmosphere in which the questioning of tradition and authority seems only natural. In the context of the modern Mass led by Father "I am just like you," the all-male priesthood and even the liturgy of the Eucharist itself can seem strangely out of place. Since much of Catholic worship has ceased to reflect the mystery, splendor, and otherworldliness of the Church, it is hardly surprising that Catholics begin to wonder why the Church cannot reflect more of the surrounding culture.

Most of the problems with worship, both Catholic and Protestant, stem from attempts to adapt worship to a therapeutic culture in which the individual reigns supreme. Pastors cater to the perceived needs and feelings of their parishioners. I know; I did it as a pastor when I gave warm-up monologues to put myself and the congregation at ease and when I made cute little remarks, especially during that new center of mainline Protestant worship, the children's sermon. I have a friend who happily described the way in which her priest combined her daughter's first communion with a pizza party in order to make the whole process "no big deal" and something "she could feel good about."

Most of the pastors I know are not on ego trips, but they are under great pressure to make worship relevant and meaningful for people such as my friend. That is not all bad: liturgy must connect with the lives of worshipers, as the Second Vatican Council rightly acknowledged. However, the accommodation of Christian beliefs and practices to a culture fundamentally opposed to Christianity has gone too far. As Cardinal Ratzinger says in *Salt of the Earth*, "An awareness needs to develop that in fact to a large extent we [Christians] no longer know Christianity at all."

By now, the over-accommodation of Catholic worship to modern culture—the hijacking of the good intentions of Vatican II by liberal liturgists—has been well-documented. This recognition, and the efforts of societies dedicated to liturgical renewal such as Adoremus and the Society for Catholic Liturgy offer hope that "reform of the reform" is on the way. In the meantime, I still faced the problem of finding a way to live with the present reality of worship within the Church.

The answer finally came after I resolved to speak to a visiting priest at the church where I attend daily Mass. I told him I was a Lutheran pastor who wanted to become Roman Catholic but couldn't find a place to worship. Did he know of a traditional parish without guitar music? He looked at me as if I resided on another planet. "Can I ask you something?" he asked. "Why do you want to become Catholic?" He asked the question in a tone that suggested, Why would you want to do a thing like that? I mumbled something about the problems in the ELCA and my belief that the Catholic Church is the fullest, most rightly ordered manifestation of the Church on earth. "Oh," he replied. "In that case you want to go to Holy Rosary. It's an Italian parish with a beautiful sanctuary and traditional music and liturgy."

I have attended Holy Rosary ever since. There are no guitars or missalettes. The organist and choir are first rate; the organist even plays Bach and the choir often sings in Latin. More importantly, the parishioners have an attitude of quiet piety and profound reverence for the liturgy that is quite moving. They observe the muscular prayers of kneeling, genuflect-

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ing, and crossing themselves. The monsignor never begins Mass with "good morning," offers no explanations, does the Canon with great dignity and reverence. Unlike other parishes I have attended, Holy Rosary offers a seemingly endless variety of distinctively Catholic devotions—prayer hours, rosaries, novenas, Fatima devotions, Divine Mercy Masses, and nocturnal adorations. I feel I have entered a world with endless layers of meaning with the mystery of Christ in the Eucharist at its center. Here at last the Truth has become manifest. Maybe I am not part of a Protestant-type church family, but I am part of something far bigger and more important—the community that traces its history back to the apostles and their living testimony of the Risen Christ. On Corpus Christi Sunday, I was received into full communion with that cloud of witnesses.

Holy Rosary's sexton, who left his neighboring parish when the guitars were moved to the front of the sanctuary, tells me some people travel up to an hour to attend a traditional Mass at Holy Rosary. Though I admire their devotion, I still must ask—should it really be that hard?

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Christians in the Land Called Holy

Habib C. Malik

Over the centuries, political Islam has not been too kind to the native Christian communities living under its rule. Anecdotes of tolerance aside, the systematic treatment of Christians and Jews (who fall under the Islamic category of *dhimmi*) as second-class citizens is abusive and discriminatory by any standard. Though in some respects Christians and Jews fared better under Islamic rule than Muslims and Jews did, say, at the time of the Catholic reconquest of Spain in the late fifteenth century, the long term debilitating effects of *dhimmitude* have proven more detrimental. Under Islam, the *dhimmi* are not allowed to build new places of worship or renovate existing ones; *dhimmi* women are available for marriage to Muslims while the reverse is strictly prohibited; the political rights of *dhimmis* are absent; and the targeted *dhimmi* community and each individual in it are made to live in a state of perpetual humiliation in the eyes of the ruling community. These measures can only spell a recipe for gradual liquidation. With the notable exception of the Christians of Lebanon, Christian communities native to the Middle East today exhibit the scars of centuries of inferiorization and marginalization. They constitute living relics of the ravages of a system that, although technically abolished in many modern Arab states, continues on the level of official as well as popular attitudes and practices. The Christians of the Holy Land, for example—Palestinian Christians—are symptomatic of this *dhimmi* genre and its attendant complexes.

According to reliable sources, the number of Christians of all denominations today in Israel (including Jerusalem), the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip is in the neighborhood of 150,000. Christians in Jerusalem number around seven thousand. Between 1947 and 1967, the Christian population dropped from over forty-five thousand in the Old City and its environs to twenty-eight thousand. The trend is clearly towards an emptying out of the city's dwindling Christian population: "Emigration has for some time threatened to reduce Jerusalem to a museum of Christian history rather than the center of a living Christian community," writes Norman Horner in his *A Guide to Christian Churches in the Middle East.* Informed Palestinians often speak about an identity crisis that afflicts Christians in their ranks. Being neither Muslim nor Jewish, they feel rejected by the two larger communities. Being Palestinian, they can never be a part of Israel even if some of them carry Israeli passports. And being Christian Arabs, they are not easily integrated into the wider Christian world. Add to these factors the economic difficulties that many of them have faced—the land seizures and the arbitrary hirings and firings—plus the obstacles they experience in trying to get a higher education (only 5 percent of the students at Israeli universities are Arab) and the rising tide of Muslim, Jewish, and evangelical Christian fundamentalisms—and the pressures to emigrate become very palpable. Nor does it help that the hierarchy of the largest Christian denomination, the Eastern Orthodox, is composed of ethnic Greeks, thereby creating a linguistic and cultural rift between church authorities and their Arab congregations.

By and large, Palestinian Christians have looked to Palestinian nationalism for a meeting ground with their Palestinian Muslim counterparts. This point of intersection has all too often been mythologized by intellectuals and clergymen who never tire of insisting that harmony has always prevailed between Muslims and Christians in Palestine. The Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem Riyah Abu-'Assal stated emphatically to this author: "The entire history of Palestine never witnessed any religious conflict between Christians and Muslims." In her book *This Side of Peace*, Hanan Ashrawi declares that while growing up she felt no difference between Palestinian Christians and Muslims: "We did not

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know who was what, and it was not an issue."

This sentiment is motivated primarily by a desire for a unified position vis-à-vis Israel. But it also stems from a deeper *dhimmi* psychological state: the urge to find—or to imagine and fabricate if need be—a common cause with the ruling majority in order to dilute the existing religious differences and perhaps ease the weight of political Islam's inevitable discrimination. The history of Palestinian Christianity has, for the most part, been no different from that of *dhimmi* Christianity throughout the Levant. Were Israel not in the picture the problem of *dhimmi* subservience would still exist for Palestinian Christians. And even with Israel as the perceived and proclaimed enemy of both Muslim and Christian Palestinians, the specter of *dhimmi* subjugation continues to lurk just below the surface. Palestinians, particularly Christians, get very agitated and defensive when confronted with reports of persecution of Christians by Muslim Palestinians. Their reflex attitude is to dismiss such reports as lies inspired by Israeli disinformation.

Palestinian Christianity differs from the rest of Middle Eastern Christianity in that it is marked by an obsession with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem. Christians in Palestine improbably suppose that *all* persecution of Christians in the region would be softened, if not alleviated altogether, if the Palestinian problem were solved. This view relies on the myth that everything was fine between Christians and Muslims until Israel came along.

There are two big problems with this Palestinian Christian interpretation. First, it does not account for the subtle complexities and convoluted nuances of a region like the Middle East. Once again, removing Israel from the equation and satisfying the Palestinians beyond their wildest dreams would not eliminate the violence against non-Muslims inherent in political Islam. Second, this interpretation is not shared by the vast majority of the region's Christians, whether *dhimmi* or free. Egyptian and Lebanese Christians, the largest and most significant Christian communities of the Arab world, do not share the same set of anxieties as the Palestinian Christians do. They know better than to believe that once the Palestinian problem is laid to rest all will be well.

Palestinian Christians further differ from other Christian communities in the region in their acute discomfort with the Jewish Old Testament. They cannot bear to recite certain Psalms or to read the Old Testament stories because of their immediate associations with today's state of Israel and the Arab-Israeli confrontation. This unfortunate situation is tantamount to a modern version of the Marcionite heresy, which was put to rest in A.D.144. Marcion (c. 90-c. 165) rejected all appeals to the Old Testament and urged Christians to concentrate exclusively on the New Testament Gospels and the letters of St. Paul. In the spirit of Marcion, some Palestinian Christians in their liturgies have excised or doctored specific references to the Old Testament and to the People of Israel. These contemporary Marcionites transpose their current political tragedies resulting from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to the realm of religious faith, with much doctrinal confusion as a result. This misdirected and unnecessary alienation of Palestinian Christians from the Old Testament ought not to be encouraged. The last thing their traumatized and precarious ancestral faith needs now is to be burdened with a Marcionite heresy.

Whichever way one looks at it (except as an expression of the prevailing *dhimmi* motif), Palestinian Christianity is unrepresentative of the wider Christian communities scattered throughout the Middle East. There lurks a disturbed restlessness in the Christians of the Holy Land not shared by their brothers in neighboring lands. Maybe there is no remedy for this restlessness, this anxiety and confusion about who they are and whether they have a future and, if so, what and with whom that future might be. I have been pondering these questions for years, as have others, and answers are in very short supply. I try to nurture a hope that from within Palestinian Christianity will emerge an understanding that is the exact opposite of Marcionism: a theology and moral vision that will recognize Jews as elder brothers in the faith of Abraham, and offer them the land freely. On such a basis, or so I would like to believe, Jews and Christians could work out a peaceful and enduring relationship to their mutual benefit. With God all things are possible, and we should not despair of that happening. Meanwhile, the ominous prospect is that there soon will be no Christians who call home the land that Christians call holy.

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How the Court Became Supreme

Robert Lowry Clinton

The past half century has witnessed the rise to prominence of a constitutional theory that gives the U.S. Supreme Court a virtual monopoly in American constitutional law. This theory grants the Court conclusive authority to determine the meaning of constitutional provisions—even those that empower the other, supposedly coequal, branches of the national government. The theory has become so prominent that no serious discussion of the United States Constitution can proceed without acknowledgment of the fact that the Court is now regarded by almost everyone to be the primary guardian of our fundamental law. The theme is echoed in scholarly books and articles, in the casebooks we use to train lawyers, in the political science textbooks we use to train citizens, in the councils of government, in the media, and even in the streets.

The Court's monopoly in constitutional law rests largely upon two kinds of argument. The political argument holds that judges must control the Constitution to protect individuals and groups from the tyranny of the majority in the legislatures. The legal-historical argument asserts that judicial supremacy in constitutional matters is grounded in American constitutional history and justified in Supreme Court doctrine, especially in the landmark case of *Marbury v. Madison* (1803).

The Court's constitutional hegemony, coupled with the extension of federal equity powers that has accompanied it, has created an environment in which federal courts in the most fundamental ways control the activities of coordinate agencies in the national government, the states, local governments, and many quasi-public and private organizations. In some instances, judicial supervision has penetrated so deeply as to affect the micromanagement of daily operational details for extended periods of time. As Robert F. Nagel describes it:

> This unprecedented use of judicial power is not a response to specific and limited necessity or emergency. The power is exercised in every state and on a wide variety of social issues. Even a relatively "conservative" Supreme Court seems transfixed; recent decisions, such as those dealing with the legislative veto and political gerrymandering, illustrate the Court's continuing insistence that almost no public issue should be excluded from judicial oversight. Heavy reliance on the judiciary—in various ideological directions—is fast becoming an ingrained part of the American system; already it is difficult for many even to imagine any alternative.

Similar concerns were echoed in the November 1996 FIRST THINGS symposium on American democracy and the courts, even to the point of suggesting that our constitutional order is now threatened so profoundly by judicial usurpation that conscientious citizens may begin to wonder about the extent of their political obligation.

In the academy, judicialization has turned virtually all discussions about the Constitution into discussions about the role of judges in its interpretation. Soterios Barber, one of the few contemporary constitutional theorists who has tried to establish that the Constitution and constitutional law are two different things, nonetheless suggests that the most important job of "mainstream scholars" is to justify "a strong and unapologetic exercise of judicial power in constitutional cases." Michael Perry says that in our society, where "it is axiomatic that the judiciary should

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enforce the Constitution, the choice among competing conceptions of the Constitution is . . . precisely a choice among competing conceptions of judicial role. In resolving the question how to conceive of the Constitution, we are resolving the question what role the judiciary should play. In that sense, the two questions are really one question: What conception of 'Constitution/judicial role' ought we to choose?" Mark Tushnet, who sees judicial review as an "all or nothing" proposition, states: "Either one allows judges to do whatever they want or one allows majorities to do whatever they want. Either choice is deeply anticonstitutional—which means, I suppose, that constitutionalism is self-contradictory."

Here, then, are three of our nation's leading constitutional thinkers declaring respectively: 1) that the main job of constitutional scholars today is to *justify judicial activism* (not to understand the Constitution); 2) that in our system, the word "Constitution" really means "judicial role"; and 3) that constitutionalism is "anticonstitutional," or "self-contradictory." Constitutionalism may be a contradiction under any regime in which judicial review is "all or nothing," but judicial review is "all or nothing" only under a theory of *judicial supremacy*. If judicial supremacy is incompatible with constitutionalism, why shouldn't we just get rid of it and keep the Constitution and its more modest version of judicial review?

Before the Civil War all three branches of the federal government—Congress and the President as much as the Court—interpreted the Constitution. The great debates in Congress were over the meaning of important constitutional provisions. The antebellum congressional record is filled with speeches asserting the legislators' duty to interpret the Constitution rightly and in accordance with accepted canons of construction. In the 1790s, debates in Congress on the meaning of key provisions in Articles I, II, and III shaped the contours of the federal government for a century-and-a-half. At the same time, early presidential vetoes of congressional acts were exercised almost solely on constitutional grounds, and most of these were accompanied by explicit, uncontested assertions of executive authority to interpret the fundamental law. The doctrine of political questions, weakened today, was quite widely held in the nineteenth century. Under this doctrine, the Court abstains from deciding constitutional issues for which there are insufficient judicial precedents, that are textually committed to Congress or the President, or that are of an essentially "political" character. This doctrine, first suggested by the Marshall Court in *Marbury v. Madison*, was an early legal expression of the fundamental truth that not all constitutional problems are appropriate for resolution by courts.

After the Civil War the courts did become more aggressive in challenging laws believed to be constitutionally infirm, but the Supreme Court itself did not claim "finality" or conclusiveness for its own constitutional interpretations until 1958. Likewise, the Court made no assertion of power to control the boundaries of constitutional authority assigned to other agencies of government until the late nineteenth century, except in a narrow range of cases that will be described below.

Thus the origin of modern judicial supremacy in constitutional law can be found neither in the Constitution nor in its early judicial application. Tocqueville's famous aphorism according to which all political questions sooner or later develop into judicial ones described a feared tendency rather than a reality. So had the earlier arguments of the Antifederalist Brutus. Brutus clearly saw vast potential for expansive judicial development in the 1787 Constitution, but his worst fears did not materialize until a century later. When Jeffersonian Republicans and Jacksonian Democrats launched early attacks on the Court, they did so on the basis of a widespread belief that congressional or presidential interpretations of the Constitution were entitled to as much respect as those of the Court.

During the last forty years, however, the Supreme Court has—with increasing frequency, intensity, and success—pressed its claim to be the primary, even exclusive, organ of constitutional interpretation in the United States. The first assertion of this claim came in 1958, in *Cooper v. Aaron* (the Little Rock school desegregation case). The Court declared the federal judiciary to be "supreme in the exposition of the law of the Constitution," effectively equating the Court's own interpretations with the Constitution itself. The legal peg supporting this maneuver was the Court's assertion that its own constitutional rulings possessed status as the "supreme law" under Article VI, alongside constitutional provisions, national laws, and federal treaties. The *Cooper* Court also wrongly cited *Marbury v. Madison* as precedent for its newly discovered "ultimate" interpretive authority. Because of the *Cooper* decision and its more recent progeny, many have come to believe that in *Marbury* the Court really had declared itself the primary organ of constitutional interpretation. This belief is a useful fiction for a Court determined to establish its own constitutional hegemony, for it allows the Court to claim the support of the great Chief Justice John Marshall for its assertion of power. Such doctrinal support is essential in a legal system with common law roots and *stare decisis* pretensions.

But as the Court's own record of precedents demonstrates, its post-1958 conception of American constitutional history is fundamentally wrong. A limited form of judicial review was already established by 1800, but only for relatively "clear cases." *Marbury* did not alter this, but rather established a clear precedent for the Court's power to disregard congressional laws in cases "of a judiciary nature"—

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cases in which *judicial* functions were threatened by application of a questionable statutory provision. *Marbury* established only that the judiciary would play an important role in constitutional interpretation, not that it would play the ultimate role. After *Marbury* the Court did not invalidate another act of Congress until *Dred Scott v. Sanford* in 1857. It would not cite *Marbury* in support of any kind of constitutional judicial review until the 1880s, and not in support of broad-gauged review until the 1950s.

Since the decision in *Cooper v. Aaron*, the Court has used *Marbury* to support its constitutional hegemony at least ten times, most recently in *City of Boerne v. Flores* (1997). There, the Court invalidated a provision of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA) that attempted to restore the "compelling interest" standard in First Amendment free exercise cases that the Court had declined to apply in *Employment Div. v. Smith* (1990). In promulgating RFRA, Congress relied upon its authority to "enforce, by appropriate legislation," the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment, which, by judicial ruling, applies the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause to the states. But the Court held in *Boerne* that the congressional enforcement authority is only "remedial," not "substantive"; and thus that Congress is forbidden to determine "the substance of the Fourteenth Amendment's restrictions on the States," or to enact legislation that "alters the meaning of the Free Exercise Clause" by determining "what constitutes a constitutional violation."

It is difficult to see how Congress can "enforce" the Constitution without being able to "determine what constitutes a constitutional violation." For this essay, though, the important point is this: RFRA can be said to have altered the meaning of the Free Exercise Clause only because in *Cooper v. Aaron* the Court had put its own "interpretations" on a par with the Constitution itself. According to the logic of *Cooper*, the Court's decision in *Smith* about the meaning of the Free Exercise Clause actually *is* the Free Exercise Clause. In *Boerne*, not content to rest upon this claim alone, the Court, for the first time ever (so far as I know), *explicitly denied the authority of Congress to interpret the Constitution* with any conclusive effect, or to define its own powers in accordance with it.

Thus the *Boerne* Court, in spelling out the full implications of *Cooper*'s "final interpreter" doctrine, appears to have brought the development of judicial supremacy to completion. Modern judicial review affords the Supreme Court ultimate freedom to strike down laws merely because the Justices believe those laws to be inconsistent with the Constitution, no matter what the constitutional issue involved, and no matter how clearly the Constitution assigns authority to another branch of government. Coordinate agencies of government, the policies of which are defeated by the Court, are then expected to march to the Court-imposed drumbeat, even to the point of conforming future policy choices to judicial preferences.

It has not always been so. Nowhere is this better shown than in the Court's historical treatment of the *Marbury* case—the very case misrepresented in *Cooper* and *Boerne* to support constitutional judicial supremacy. *Marbury* involved a provision addressed directly to the Court—Article III's original/appellate jurisdictional distribution—while *Boerne* involved the Fourteenth Amendment, whose enforcement provision is directly addressed to Congress. *Marbury* contains no assertion that the Court has exclusive authority to bind other parts of the government. Chief Justice Marshall claimed only that the Court must obey explicit commands of the Constitution in preference to conflicting laws when such commands are directed at the Court itself and not to another branch of government.

The Court's own treatment of *Marbury* as a precedent throughout most of its history shows that this narrow reading of the case is accurate. In my book *Marbury v. Madison and Judicial Review* (1989), I surveyed all the Court's citations of *Marbury* from 1803 through 1983. I have since updated the references through 1997. Here is what I have found: Between 1803 and 1997, *Marbury* was cited in 201 separate opinions by Justices of the Supreme Court. From the beginning to 1865, *Marbury* was cited twenty-five times—and only to support narrow rulings on the circumstances in which the Court's original or appellate jurisdiction could be invoked (eighteen times), or on the remedial tools to be employed in the respective jurisdictions (seven times). (The technical issue in *Marbury* was the appropriateness of the Court's using the common law writ of mandamus to compel the Secretary of State—James Madison—to produce evidence that William Marbury had been appointed justice-of-the-peace for the District of Columbia.) The Court's power to invalidate laws was mentioned in *none* of these cases; and surprisingly, *Marbury* was not mentioned in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, the only other case before the Civil War in which the Court invalidated an act of Congress.

In the thirty years following the Civil War, a period in which the Court invalidated national laws in no fewer than twenty cases, *Marbury* was mentioned in none of them. When *Marbury* was cited, it pertained mostly to jurisdiction or mandamus. It is during this period, however, that *Marbury* was first cited in support of judicial review, though not to support court review of an act of Congress. Instead, the citation, in *Mugler v. Kansas* (1887), was offered in justification of judicial authority to overturn *state* laws on substantive due process grounds. It was not until the Income Tax Cases in 1895 that the Court for the first time cited *Marbury* in support of its power to determine the constitutionality of national laws, confining the reach of that authority to "clear" or "prop-

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er" cases.

Between 1895 and 1957, the Justices cited *Marbury* thirty-eight times, but only eight of those citations pertain to the judicial power to invalidate laws, and all eight describe the power in a very narrow or restrictive way. Six are offered in support of the idea that judicial review should be confined to "clear" or "proper" cases, to "cases or controversies," or to cases in which literal interpretations of the Constitution are possible. One notes a petitioner's argument that *Marbury* forbids executive invasions of "the judicial sphere." Another mentions *Marbury* as one of a long line of cases in which legislation was declared unconstitutional "because it imposed on the Court powers or functions that were regarded as outside the scope of the 'judicial power' lodged in the Court by the Constitution."

Although the Court began to notice *Marbury*'s judicial-review holding during the first half of the present century, it fully recognized the highly restrictive nature of that holding. All told, of the eighty-eight citations of *Marbury* by Justices of the Supreme Court between 1803 and 1957, only ten refer to the part of the opinion concerning the judicial power to invalidate laws. All ten of these references advance highly restrictive notions of the Court's power. Nowhere can be found even so much as a suggestion that the Court is the final arbiter of constitutional questions. If *Marbury* really meant what the *Cooper* and *Boerne* Courts said it meant, *why wouldn't someone on the Court have said so during its first century-and-a-half of existence?*

Everything changed in 1958. Over the next forty years, there were 113 separate citations of *Marbury*, greater than the total of the previous 154 years. During this period, *Marbury* was employed fifty-eight times to support judicial review, twenty-one times to justify sweeping assertions of judicial power, and ten times to support the idea that the Court is final or ultimate interpreter of the Constitution, with power to issue binding proclamations to any other agency or department of government respecting any constitutional issue. *Cooper v. Aaron* is the earliest case in the last-mentioned category, and *Boerne* is the most recent. If we take the Court's own statements seriously, we must conclude that judicial supremacy originated neither in *Marbury* nor in the Constitution, but was established by the Warren Court and developed subsequently by the Burger Court. And if we take seriously the Court's use of *Marbury* in the post-1983 era—particularly in the *Boerne* case—we must conclude that the Rehnquist Court is also doing its part to perpetuate the doctrine.

If the doctrine of judicial supremacy is not the correct understanding of the judiciary established in the Constitution, then what is? The best way to answer this question is to contrast the modern doctrine with its traditional counterpart as revealed in Article III of the Constitution, *Marbury v. Madison*, and the thought of the Framers.

Judicial review of national law in the U.S. is usually thought to be constitutionally grounded in the Article III, Section 2 extension of federal judicial power to cases "arising under" the Constitution, laws, and treaties. The exact language is this: "The judicial power shall extend to all cases, in law and equity, arising under the Constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made, or which shall be made, under their authority." The most explicit contemporaneous statement regarding the scope of this power is found in James Madison's Notes on the Federal Convention. According to Madison, the Founders extended federal judicial power only after agreeing that the jurisdiction was to be "constructively limited to cases of a judiciary nature." This statement was clarified on June 17, 1789, amid congressional debate over the President's removal power. There, Madison flatly denied the power of *any* branch of the national government (including the judicial) to "determine the limits of the constitutional division of power":

> I acknowledge, in the ordinary course of government, that the exposition of the laws and Constitution devolves upon the judicial. But, I beg to know upon what principle it can be contended that any one department draws from the Constitution greater powers than another in marking out the limits of the powers of the several departments. The Constitution is the charter of the people to the government; it specifies certain great powers as absolutely granted, and marks out the departments to exercise them. If the constitutional boundary of either be brought into question, I do not see that any one of these independent departments has more right than another to declare their sentiments on that point. . . . There is not one government on the face of the earth, so far as I recollect, there is not one in the United States, in which provision is made for a particular authority to determine the limits of the constitutional division of power between the branches of the government. In all systems there are points which must be adjusted by the departments themselves, to which no one of them is competent.

There can be little doubt about Madison's meaning here. Among the "points which must be adjusted by the departments themselves" are all questions pertaining to "the limits of the constitutional division of power between the branches of the government." Since no single department "draws from the Constitution greater powers than another in marking out the limits of the powers of the several departments," the Founders' restriction of the "arising under" jurisdiction of federal courts to cases "of a judiciary nature" must be construed as a denial of the power of

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courts to issue final constitutional pronouncements in cases involving interpretations of the constitutional powers of coordinate agencies. Cases *not* of a judiciary nature that *also* arise under the Constitution are preeminently those that require determination of the constitutional authority of the legislative or executive branch. Appropriate cases for judicial review are those that do not require such a determination.

Under this view, it is only in cases that involve constitutional provisions directly addressed to the courts that the Supreme Court's refusal to apply relevant law is necessarily final. In cases involving constitutional provisions addressed to other branches of government (e.g., the Article I, Section 8 "necessary and proper" clause), the Court may surely refuse to apply the law, but it may not do so with *finality* in the strict sense. Even though the Court's decision may bind the parties in a particular case, Congress might nonetheless choose to disregard the Court's constitutional ruling and p.ovide for executive enforcement of the statute. Congress may even go so far as to utilize its power to regulate the Court's appellate jurisdiction so as to discourage or prevent future appeals of the law's constitutional validity. In such instances, it is the judgment of Congress, not of the Court, that will be "final." On the other hand, if the case involves a constitutional provision like the Sixth Amendment's right to confront one's accusers in a federal criminal trial, then the Court's decision on the constitutional question will necessarily be final, since carrying on any federal criminal trial requires a court, and federal trial courts are bound by rulings of the Supreme Court.

Madison's theory of review divides constitutionally defective laws into two categories: those instances where the unconstitutional law affects the function of the judiciary and those where it does not. The most obvious example of the former is an act which operates "unconstitutionally" on a court's performance of its own duties; here judicial review is appropriate. In the other category, constitutional judicial review is inappropriate, because the performance of judicial duty in those instances is unaffected by the constitutional infirmity of the law. Taking Madison's distinction seriously is thus fatal to any doctrine of judicial supremacy.

Ironically, *Marbury v. Madison*, the case most often cited to support judicial supremacy, is also the case that best illustrates Madison's narrow theory of review. Enhancing this irony is the fact that the case involved Madison himself—albeit nominally—as a party. In *Marbury*, Chief Justice John Marshall, writing for a unanimous Court, held that a provision of the Judiciary Act of 1789 extending the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction to all federal officials contravened Article III's jurisdictional distribution (which restricted the Court's original jurisdiction to cases involving "ambassadors, public ministers, consuls, and states"). *Marbury* is a case of judiciary nature in the pure sense because it involved not only constitutional and statutory provisions aimed directly at the Court, but also a constitutional provision which embodies a clear restriction on judicial power. *The Court could not have applied the statute in* Marbury *without at the same time violating the Constitution.* Moreover, the Court's refusal to apply the law left the coordinate branches of government no alternative but to comply with its decision (i.e., to do nothing) because the Court, by enforcing a constitutional restriction on judicial power, essentially *did nothing*. Its decision therefore amounted to a "final," or "ultimate" interpretation of the Constitution.

If this sounds like a strange basis for judicial review, it should be remembered that virtually all exercises of review by courts in the early years of the American republic were of the *Marbury* type. That is, they involved courts resisting legislative attempts either: 1) to impose extra-constitutional duties on judges, as in the famous *Correspondence of the Judges* of August 8, 1793, where the Court refused to render an advisory opinion requested by the President and Secretary of State; or 2) to interfere with judicial procedure in ways unauthorized by the Constitution, as in the early cases involving the suspension of jury trials in New Jersey, Rhode Island, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Kentucky; or 3) to usurp judicial functions outright, as in the legislative usurpations via attainders and retroactive criminal laws in Virginia and Kentucky.

If one has trouble imagining judicial review so confined in its scope, it is probably because the modern American mind, conditioned by more than forty years of judicial supremacy, can hardly help but regard the judicial branch as a coequal partner in the public policy-making process. But it was to prevent such participation by judges in policy making that the Founders circumscribed the jurisdiction and power of courts so narrowly in the first place. And it was to prevent being dragged into such processes that early American judges strongly utilized the power of review to safeguard their independence, both by resisting legislative encroachment on legitimate judicial functions, and by refusing to intrude upon domains they (and the Founders) regarded as better left to others.

Marshall recognized this clearly in *Marbury*, drawing a sharp distinction between the issue of *constitutionality* and that of *judicial review*; that is, between (a) a law being a nullity due to its incompatibility with the Constitution, on the one hand, and (b) a court's having the power to nullify such a law, on the other. In Marshall's words, granting that "the Constitution is either a superior, paramount law, unchangeable by ordinary means, or it is on a level with ordinary legislative acts," does it nonetheless follow that an act, "repugnant to the Constitution, notwithstanding its invalidity, binds the courts, and obliges

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them to give it effect?" In answering this rhetorical question, Marshall expounded the theory of judicial function for which *Marbury* is justly celebrated:

> It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is. Those who apply the rule to particular cases must of necessity expound and interpret that rule. If two laws conflict with each other, the courts must decide on the operation of each. So if a law be in opposition to the Constitution; if both the law and the Constitution apply to a particular case, so that the court must either decide that case conformably to the law, disregarding the Constitution; or conformably to the Constitution, disregarding the law; the court must determine which of these conflicting rules governs the case. This is the very essence of judicial duty.

Since these lines have been so frequently cited as precedent for a notion of judicial power that renders the Supreme Court ultimate arbiter of all constitutional questions, it is important to notice what is *not* said in them. No exclusive power to interpret the fundamental law is claimed for the Court here or anywhere else in *Marbury*. In fact, no judicial power to "strike down" laws at all is claimed—a fact recognized by the Court throughout the nineteenth century but now apparently recognized only by Justice Antonin Scalia. Quoting from the Court's opinion in *Ex parte Siebold* (1880), Scalia notes in *Reynoldsville Casket Co. v. Hyde* (1995) that what a court does with regard to an unconstitutional law is simply to *ignore* it. It decides the case "disregarding the [unconstitutional] law" because a law repugnant to the Constitution "is void, and is as no law."

To be sure, for the *Marbury* Court, it is "the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is," but only "of necessity," whenever those "who apply the rule to particular cases" *must* determine which of two "conflicting rules governs the case." In other words, the power of review claimed by the Court in *Marbury* is merely a power of discretion to disregard (not "strike down"—as the modern phrase suggests) existing laws in the decision of particular controversies, provided that the constitutional and statutory provisions involved are, like those in Article III and the Judiciary Act, addressed to the Court itself. If the provisions are not addressed to the Court, then the Court will not be compelled, as a matter of logic, to choose between them in order to decide the case. Precedents are created by holdings on points of law necessarily decided in particular cases. The Court's choice between constitutional and statutory provisions, one or both of which are not addressed to the Court, should not control the decision of subsequent cases. So *Marbury* affords no basis for inferring that the Court is bound to disregard a statutory provision in conflict with the Constitution, except in those relatively few instances in which the Constitution stipulates a direct rule for the courts.

Most of the Constitution's direct rules for the courts are found in three places: Article III, Amendments 4-8 of the Bill of Rights, and certain provisions of Article I, Section 9. The classic example is one that Marshall himself used in *Marbury*: the treason clause of Article III, Section 3, which requires either a confession or the testimony of two witnesses in open court to the same overt treasonable act. For an obvious example from the Bill of Rights, one only need add the requirement of the Fifth Amendment that such a confession be uncoerced. Now suppose that Congress, in a zealous attempt to suppress subversion, amends the federal rules of criminal procedure so as to make it possible for the government to obtain a conviction on a charge of treason on the basis of a coerced confession, or on the testimony of only one witness. Much like the situation faced by the Court in *Marbury*, this situation presents a clearcut case of a judiciary nature precisely because the Court cannot apply the statutory provision without at the same time violating the Constitution.

Attention to this principle can help to determine whether any particular case is of a judiciary nature. One may simply ask: "Can the Court apply the law in question without itself directly violating the Constitution?" If the answer to this question is no, then the case is "judiciary" in nature; the Court will have no sensible alternative but to invalidate (refuse to apply) the law. If the answer is yes, then the case is "nonjudiciary" in nature, and the Court must apply the law, *whether or not the judges believe that the law itself violates the Constitution.*

Applying this method, one may read down the list of provisions in Article III and Amendments 4-8, along with the attainder, ex post facto, and habeas corpus provisions of Article I, Section 9, and be quickly satisfied that most of the cases that have arisen (and may yet arise) under them fall into the former category (cases of a judiciary nature). At the same time, one may look almost anywhere else in the Constitution and be satisfied, though perhaps not so quickly, that most of the cases that have arisen (and may yet arise) under provisions other than Article III, Amendments 4-8, and Article I, Section 9 fall into the latter category (cases of a nonjudiciary nature).

This approach would authorize judicial invalidation of a law only when upholding the law would cause the Court to violate a constitutional restriction on judicial power. It would also not allow the Court to defeat legislative or executive policies on the ground that such policies were unauthorized by the Constitution. It would not allow judicial nullification of policies forbidden by the Constitution, except when the participation of courts is required to effectuate them. Would adoption of this approach—

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one might call it "functional coordinate review"—put an end to constitutional law as we presently understand it, leaving us in the grip of tyrannical popular majorities?

History is reassuring. Of course, had the Supreme Court followed this approach throughout its history, the majority of the cases wherein congressional acts were nullified would have been decided differently. Of the 130-odd cases in which federal laws were invalidated between 1800 and 1985, only thirty-eight were "of a judiciary nature." However, when the cases are examined more closely, a different picture emerges. First, leaving aside *Marbury* and *Dred Scott* (the earliest instance of judicial invalidation of congressional policy in a case not of a judiciary nature), the Court invalidated national laws in seventy-five cases from its beginning to 1936—the eve of the Roosevelt Court-packing scheme. Of these, sixty-one were not of a judiciary nature, having occurred, under Madison's theory, in cases inappropriate for judicial review. The bulk of these latter cases were decided on the ground either of (a) Fifth Amendment substantive "economic" due process, (b) Tenth Amendment "dual federalism," or (c) the Court's mere opinion that Congress had overstepped its constitutional authority. Virtually all of the "inappropriate" decisions have since been either overruled or so thoroughly emasculated as to have effectively disappeared from our constitutional law.

Between the Roosevelt Court and 1985, the Court overturned fifty-three acts of Congress. The Roosevelt and Warren Courts together performed twenty-six of these, all but five in cases "of a judiciary nature." On the other hand, only two of the twenty-seven Burger Court nullifications were clearly in cases of a judiciary nature. The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this brief survey is that, unless one happens to be a staunch devotee of the Burger Court, adoption of Madison's theory of review would hardly have reduced our constitutional law to a shambles. Instead, it would have eliminated the more questionable portion of the Court's ninety or so historical interferences with national legislative policy, of which the Court has itself already eliminated roughly two-thirds.

I believe that this record is a testament to the good sense of Madison and the Founders. They extended federal judicial power to cases "arising under" the Constitution, laws, and treaties only after they had generally agreed that the power was "limited to cases of a judiciary nature." Limiting "final" constitutional review by the Court to these cases leaves to coordinate branches of government final authority to determine the reach of their own constitutional powers. It preserves the coequality accorded to each division of the government by the Founders. It strengthens the separation of powers by emphasizing the constitutional responsibilities of Congress and the President. And it recovers an important strand of our republican heritage that is nowhere more apparent than in the Supreme Court's own rich constitutional legacy.

I do not mean to suggest in anything said above that the Court's reinterpretation of *Marbury* is the sole cause of modern judicial supremacy. Although such doctrinal support is essential, many factors produced the present situation. First, we note that our elected representatives often shift responsibility for particularly unpleasant controversies onto the courts—a tendency observable at least as early as the 1850s, when the issue of slavery in the territories was certified to the Supreme Court. Second, in the decades following the Civil War, the legal establishment realized that its interests and those of its business clientele would best be served by a powerful federal judiciary, and it set in motion a series of doctrinal developments that would support the enhanced judicial role. Third, the strong social consensus of the antebellum era regarding the shape of most important constitutional issues eroded, paralyzing the political institutions; the courts, being small deliberative bodies, seemed better positioned to make decisive choices in a society riven by conflict. Finally, the twentieth-century American judiciary has become a "secular priesthood" to which Americans increasingly look for solutions to the collective moral and spiritual dilemmas into which we have been propelled by our failure to face difficult constitutional problems directly and resolve them in the political arena. The "joint opinion" of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) demonstrated the extent to which the Supreme Court has been captivated by this image of itself. In a statement fraught with irony, the *Casey* Court declared:

> Like the character of an individual, the legitimacy of the Court must be earned over time. So, indeed, must be the character of a nation of people who aspire to live according to the rule of law. Their belief in themselves as such a people is not readily separable from their understanding of the Court invested with the authority to decide their constitutional cases and speak before all others for their constitutional ideals. If the Court's legitimacy should be undermined, then, so would the country be in its very ability to see itself through its constitutional ideals.

Incredible. FI

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Jews and Catholics: Beyond Apologies

David Novak

Something very significant has happened to Jewish-Christian relations, especially Jewish-Catholic relations. Last March, the Vatican issued the statement "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," which was prepared under the direction of Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy, president of the Church's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and introduced by Pope John Paul II himself (see FT, May 1998). The document received wide publicity and stirred up a good deal of controversy. My purpose here is to provide a Jewish reaction to the overall argument of this important document, to express agreement with most of it, but also to point out what I take to be some problems within it.

I first came to Jewish-Catholic relations in 1963, while studying for the rabbinate at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. I became a student—indeed, a close disciple—of the man who to the mind of many was the most important Jewish theologian to work in America, Abraham Joshua Heschel. At that time, Professor Heschel was engaged in serious discussions with the leadership of the Catholic Church, especially with the late Augustin Cardinal Bea, in preparation for the Second Vatican Council. In 1965, the Council issued the landmark declaration *Nostra Aetate* ("In Our Time"), which outlined the Church's view of Judaism and the Jewish people, undoubtedly the most significant such statement in modern times. I remember how hopeful my teacher was for this new attitude that was emerging in the Church, and the tremendous chance he was taking in becoming the chief Jewish advisor to the Church in this enterprise. Cardinal Bea and Pope Paul VI were also taking a chance, and for similar reasons. Professor Heschel was subjected to harsh criticism—public and private—by a number of Jewish scholars for assuming that a new relationship was even possible with the Catholic Church. And the leaders of the Church received criticism from those who wondered, since the Jewish people had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, what kind of positive relationship there could be with them.

We are all the beneficiaries of those chances taken more than thirty years ago. Anyone who has watched what has happened from then until now cannot help but marvel at how far we have moved from suspicion to a level much deeper, beyond just good will and tolerance. But the whole Western world and the Jewish people in particular still live very much in the shadow of the Holocaust, the systematic program of mass extermination that resulted in the murder of six million Jews. The question must thus be raised on both sides: Just what role in that tragedy did the Catholic Church play? Until we engage in the most searching discussion of this question, we may very well be at an impasse in this new relationship. The recent statement of the Vatican is certainly a major step in that direction.

With few exceptions, the reaction of the Jewish leaders who have access to the media was negative. The *New York Times* (which although not an "official" Jewish publication certainly reflects and indeed influences a certain type of American Jewish opinion) editorially branded the Vatican statement a whitewash, a rationalization of the conduct of the Church during the Holocaust. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith expressed much the same disappointment. This view is not unanimous in the Jewish community. Rabbi James Rudin, who heads the department of the American Jewish Committee that deals with Jewish-Christian relations, issued a much more positive and hopeful response. However, Rudin's reaction seems to be a minority voice, at least so far.

What is the reason for this Jewish criticism? After

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all, the statement did condemn the Holocaust, it did condemn anti-Semitism, and it even spoke of "the sinful behavior" of certain members of the Church. Shouldn't Jews be happy to hear all this from the Vatican? Isn't this an important way of putting the Holocaust in the kind of perspective that enables us to get on with our lives, not by forgetting but by remembering? My own view is that the Jewish response is largely mistaken, and that it reflects a misunderstanding not only of Catholic theology but of Jewish theology as well. The Jewish leaders' reactions were not just uncharitable, they were also unjust.

II

The part of the Vatican statement that elicited the most negative Jewish response was a quotation from a speech first made by John Paul II in Rome on October 31, 1997. "In the Christian world—I do not say on the part of the Church as such—erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people and their alleged culpability have circulated for too long, engendering feelings of hostility toward this people." It is ironic that the Pope should be the focus of criticism, inasmuch as there has been no other pontiff in modern times, perhaps in all history, who has done more to develop rapprochement with the Jewish people and Judaism. Karol Wojtyla as a philosopher and a theologian has been deeply interested in the connection between Judaism and the teaching of the Catholic Church for most of his life. Furthermore, Karol Wojtyla has been intimately related to Jews all of his life, beginning with his childhood in Poland, where Jews were among his closest associates. Indeed, the Pope speaks Yiddish. (I know that for a fact because in 1985, when twelve of us had a private audience with him during a conference to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, I briefly spoke with him in Yiddish.) And in the face of much opposition, it is during this papacy that the Vatican has established formal diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. So, it would seem that Jews have had nothing but good from this Pope. Why, then, has there been such consternation over this one sentence quoting John Paul II in the Vatican statement?

The criticism seems to be about the fact that the Pope did not apologize for "the Church as such." Those who criticized the Church—and the Pope—have for years placed great hope on the utterance of an official apology by the Church "as such." But in the Pope's statement the Church seems to have separated herself as an institution from her condemnation of the behavior of those of her sons and daughters who cooperated with and endorsed the Nazi program of persecution and murder of the Jews. We must understand just what the Pope meant by "the Church as such." If we do that, we can arrive at a different perspective on this statement, and it can be a *Jewish* perspective properly informed by an understanding of the Jewish tradition. Jewish statements that are not informed by our own tradition are not really "Jewish" in any essential sense, but simply express the views of a group of people who happen to be Jews. None of the negative reactions I have seen to date has been informed by the Jewish tradition—though I do not rule out the possibility that an authentically Jewish negative response could be so formulated.

When a Catholic speaks of "the Church," let alone when the occupant of the Throne of Peter speaks of "the Church," he can mean one of two things. On the one hand, the Church is undoubtedly a collection of fallible human beings. The Church is made up of her members, the parts of her body, so to speak. At this level, it is certainly recognized that these fallible members of the Church can do either good or evil as is their free human choice. On the other hand, when the Pope speaks of the Church "as such," he is not speaking about a fallible collection of human beings; instead he is speaking about what the Church understands as her *magisterium*, her teaching authority, which Catholics see as expressing God's will beginning with Scripture and extending into the ongoing development of Church doctrine. At one level the Church is a human association in the world, but at another level the Church is *mater et magistra*—"mother and teacher" of her members. Understanding the Church at either of these levels, however, one can see why an "apology" is inappropriate. Later, we will examine the word the document did use, a word of far more theological significance than "apology" ever was or will be.

Let us first take the Church as a group of human beings, which is certainly the easier thing for a non-Catholic like myself to do. Now just *who* would apologize to *whom*? If one takes a Catholic who actually participated in the Nazi atrocities against the Jews, how could such a person possibly apologize? How do you apologize to someone in whose murder you were a participant? In order to apologize, you have to make your apology to someone who is capable of accepting your apology. But those who were murdered are hardly in a position to absolve anyone. And who am I as a Jew, who was only a potential victim of Nazi murder, to forgive someone who asks my forgiveness for what he or she did to Jews now dead? How can I exonerate somebody for what he or she did to somebody else? Wouldn't that be what Christians call "cheap grace"?

There is a parallel to this in the Jewish tradition. When the Sanhedrin functioned in ancient Israel and had the power of capital punishment, a criminal about to be executed for murder had the right to confess his or her crime and assert that the death to be undergone was to be "atonement for all my sins." This

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was seen as one's reconciliation with God in the world-to-come, but it did not release the criminal from the punishment he or she deserved in this world. I am reminded of the report that Hans Frank, the Nazi governor of Poland, when he was about to be executed after having been sentenced to death at Nuremberg in 1946, said that a thousand deaths would not atone for the crimes he committed. But that is between Hans Frank and God. We who have survived have no right to forgive him for what he did; we have no right to accept any apologies from him or anyone like him. On the other hand, if an apology is made by people who did not commit any such crimes, directly or even indirectly, and who do not even sympathize with the murderers, then what would they be apologizing for?

The Jewish tradition on this point is quite clear: We do not believe in inherited guilt. Indeed, when the Church declared in *Nostra Aetate* in 1965 that she no longer regarded the Jews as collectively guilty of "deicide," that is the murder of Jesus as the son of God, she was making a point she now holds in common with the Jewish moral tradition. Each person is responsible only for his or her own sins. Even the Christian doctrine of "original sin" does not mean that humans are punished for the sin of the first human pair but, rather, that humans seem inevitably to copy the sin of the first human pair. Thus the Talmud asks about how God can in all justice "visit the sins of the fathers on the sons" (Exodus 20:5). It answers that children are punished for their parents' sins only when they themselves willingly identify with them and repeat them by their own free choice. Justice, whether human or divine, must recognize with the prophet Ezekiel that only "the person who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Thus at either of these levels of humanly applicable justice, an apology makes no sense. At either level, an apology could only be empty rhetoric.

But what about the second notion of the Church, namely, "the Church as such"? This refers to the magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church. Now the teaching authority of the Church does not refer to what we usually mean by "teaching," that is, imparting information. Magisterium means teaching that calls upon the one taught to do something or believe something that is essential for the very existence of that person within the community for whom that teaching is authoritative. When the Church is understood "as such," then she cannot possibly apologize based on her own theological assumptions. For if the Church at this level were to apologize, that would presuppose a criterion of truth and right higher than the revelation upon which the Church bases its authority, the revelation that the Church claims as her own. In other words, the Church cannot criticize herself based on criteria external to her own revelation and tradition because the Church not only claims what she teaches is true, she claims that what she teaches is the truth per se, the ultimate criterion whereby everything else is either true or false, right or wrong. So, for example, the great encyclical of Pope John Paul II is called *Veritatis Splendor*, "the splendor of truth." That is the way the Church presents herself in and to the world.

Now, of course, presentation of oneself as *the* truth is highly offensive to people of a largely secular mentality. That is much of the modern charge against all religion. Religions, in this view, seem to arrogate to themselves divine authority. They seem to hold themselves above judgment by "impartial" criteria. This lies at the heart of much of the criticism of the "authoritarian" character of the Catholic Church. But on this score, Judaism is no different. Even though Judaism and Catholicism make some very different—and in some cases mutually exclusive—claims, the logic of the way the Jewish tradition makes its claims and the way the magisterium of the Church makes its claims is virtually identical. When Jews thank God for giving us the Torah (by which we mean not only the Five Books of Moses but the whole authoritative tradition of the Jewish people throughout history), we speak of *torat emet*, which means not just "true teaching" but that "the Torah is *the* truth." The Jewish tradition presents itself as the greatest revelation of God's truth that can be known in the world. That is why we call ourselves "the chosen people." It is not that we choose ourselves. It means that we have been elected by God and given the Torah. The law of heaven has now come down to earth to a singular community entrusted with its teaching. This does not mean we should not share that truth with other people, nor does it mean this truth has nothing in common with other sources of truth. We do not reject science; we do not reject the proper findings of human reason. But a Jew who is committed to the Torah as the word of God cannot in good faith criticize anything taught within the Jewish tradition from a standpoint external to that tradition. Traditionalists like myself have criticized liberal versions of Judaism for in one way or another judging Judaism based on criteria outside Judaism itself, for that is simply contrary to the way the tradition has always defined itself in the past.

That does not mean that religious traditions like Judaism and Catholicism are incapable of any critical development or cannot ever change their minds. Religious traditions are in a constant state of development and renewed self-understanding. But the criteria of development, the standards for change, are internal. If we discover that something we taught in the past now appears not to be God's will, or is even contrary to God's will, then we must discover again the fundamental principles of our revelation and tradition and reinterpret our teaching so that we do not again lead our people astray. Thus the rabbinic principle that "the Sages be careful in their words" means

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that even correct teaching, when not properly formulated, can lead people to conclusions that are really unwarranted by the tradition. They can lead to "erroneous and unjust interpretations"; in fact, these are the very words the Pope used when speaking in a self-critical mode about Catholic teaching, words repeated in the document on the Holocaust.

So the charge that the Pope could not criticize "the Church as such" is true yet mistaken. Of course, the Pope cannot criticize the Church the way an uncommitted outsider might criticize her. The Church, like the Jewish tradition upon which she is largely patterned, can only look inward for guidance. The only criticism, then, that could be made either by an insider or a sympathetic outsider is if either the Jewish tradition or the Church as such refused to engage in any self-criticism at all. But, clearly, if that were the stance of the Church, a document like "We Remember" or *Nostra Aetate* could never have been written. That is how the Pope, when he spoke in the synagogue in Rome (by his own unprecedented invitation), condemned anti-Semitism: "at any time from any source," which means that when anti-Semitism has come out of Church teaching, those who so taught it are to be considered in error by the internal criteria of the teaching authority of the Church itself.

Much the same is the case with reappraisals of morally charged issues within the Jewish tradition, which enables Jews who know that tradition and the way it operates to appreciate something quite analogous in another tradition. A good example of this type of reappraisal is the way Jews have been dealing with the question of the role of women in Judaism. Such reappraisal would be false to the internal integrity of the Jewish tradition if it simply assumed that because the role of women had changed so radically in the surrounding culture, therefore it ought to change within Judaism. One must look into the tradition itself for sources for a process of careful and responsible reinterpretation. That is not to deny that religious traditions are, to a certain extent, influenced by what is happening in the surrounding culture, even when the culture is largely indifferent or even hostile to these traditions. Nevertheless, those external influences can only stimulate thinkers within a tradition to be sensitive to some issues more than others, issues for which there are already sources within the tradition itself.

To make this analogy between Jewish and Catholic moral logic is not to say that the issue of the Holocaust for the Church and the issue of women for Judaism have the same moral gravity. The analogy simply illustrates how much of the logic employed in the criticism of the Church on this issue could be similarly employed against Judaism. Of course, it might well be true that many of the Jewish critics of the Vatican statement on the Holocaust think Judaism can and should be subjected to the same type of criticism they have leveled against the Church. But if that is so, I find it rather disingenuous that such critics would label their criticism in any way "Jewish," unless, that is, they regard the Jews as nothing but a contemporary political interest group, having no tradition from which to draw authority to make any kind of authentic Jewish critique.

When one sees how moral logic within religious traditions like Judaism and Catholicism operates, then it is possible to understand why it is not an apology that is called for. Apologies are cheap. It seems that everyone is apologizing for just about everything in the past these days. No, this is not an apology nor should it be. Instead, it is a process of profound introspection. As such, Jews can appreciate the way the Church, and especially the Pope, are grappling with this issue in the way Jews grapple with this and similar issues. Indeed, as regards the Holocaust, as current scholarship is showing, we Jews have great moral questions of our own to confront and judge.

If, then, the Church, either as an association of fallible human beings or as a community claiming authority from the revelation of God, could not and should not utter an "apology," what should it be doing? Well, the statement says it is "an act of repentance." And then, mirabile dictu, in parenthesis we see the Hebrew word for repentance: *teshuvah*. Here the Church has quite consciously and deliberately chosen a central term straight out of the Jewish theological tradition. Why an act of *teshuvah*? It is because, as the statement goes on to say, "as members of the Church, we are linked to the sins as well the merits of all her children." This means a certain kind of collective responsibility. Of course, in a literal moral sense, I am not responsible for somebody else's sins, and so a Catholic today who is horrified by Nazism and all it stood for and wrought in the world is certainly not responsible for what Hitler did, simply because Hitler was baptized a Catholic. It is not that person's responsibility according to any moral logic I know.

However, both Judaism and Catholicism are "covenantal"; for each, the relationship with God is primarily a communal affair, not merely a relationship between an individual person and God. Human beings are essentially communal creatures. If we are to be related to God in the fullness of our humanity, it has to be in the context of a community. In the covenant, God chooses a particular community for a unique relationship. Traditional Jews can recognize this point quite readily. For example, virtually all Jewish prayer is uttered by plural subjects, "we" not "I." And that is the case even when a Jew is unable to pray with a congregation. He or she is always part of the congregation, even when unable to be physically part of it.

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In a covenantal religion, the ties are not only between the community and God. For these very ties with God undergird the ties between the members of the community itself. These ties within the community are much more intense and long lasting than the ties among those in our largely secular society and culture. In a covenanted community, even though one is not *morally* responsible for the sins of fellow members of the community, there still is an *existential* sense of collective sorrow and shame when other members of the community—even those as estranged from the community as the Nazis were—commit sins, especially sins having great public consequences.

In talmudic teaching, "every Jew is responsible for every other Jew"; that is what it means to be part of a covenanted community. I remember how my grandmother would occasionally read in the newspaper that some Jew or other had committed a crime—someone she didn't even know—and she would express her sense of sorrow and shame at what that person had done. She felt that what had been done personally affected her, even if by standards of ordinary morality her reaction would have to be judged irrational. And in the same way, by contrast, she would take pride when some Jew or other—also someone she didn't know—did something that had benefited others. Although my grandmother was not a learned woman, her attitude reflected, in the form of folk wisdom, what the Rabbis called *qiddush ha-shem* ("the sanctification of God") or *hillul ha-shem* ("the profanation of God"). When Jews do good in the world, it reflects well on God who elects them for the covenant; and when Jews do evil in the world, it reflects badly on God. With this in mind, we Jews can see how the Church, which after all learned about covenant from us, is engaged in the covenantal act of repentance, of *teshuvah*.

As regards the Holocaust, the Church feels sorrow and shame about those of her faithful who did not respond properly to Nazism, or who did nothing more than sympathize with what was being done to the victims of Nazi persecution. That sorrow and shame is not because of a mere association of baptized Catholics with Nazis and Nazi sympathizers; it seems to be sorrow and shame that the teaching authority of the Church did not do enough to encourage such persons to resist the evil to which they succumbed. In other words, perhaps the Church did not do a good enough job of teaching the principles of Christianity to many of her sons and daughters. This failure has led the Church to reiterate its condemnations of racism and anti-Semitism.

The Church learns from her mistakes, and she seems to be doing this by an ongoing process of introspection more prolonged and more painful than any mere apology. An apology under these circumstances would either be a way of getting the Holocaust "out of the way," or it would be an act of moral suicide. That is, again, because no religious community can judge itself by someone else's standards and still exercise its existential claims upon its own faithful. A covenanted community engages in *teshuvah*, literally a "return." Those responsible for teaching the tradition must constantly be returning to its true, revealed sources, always discovering how to interpret them better and make their principles more intelligible and more effective.

To expect an apology rather than *teshuvah* is to call for something quite cheap when there is the possibility of something much more precious. An apology is an event; *teshuvah* is a process. An apology gets us "over" the past, putting it permanently behind us; returning is always on the horizon. Jews pray three times daily for God to enable us to return to Him and for Him to forgive us the sins that have placed a barrier between God and us. To be a member of a covenanted community means to acknowledge the sins of all one's fellow members. This is an awesome covenantal responsibility, beyond the demands of ordinary morality. Indeed, one can only bear such responsibility when one believes that the community has been elected by God and is the object of God's special, supernatural concern. What all of this shows, I hope, is that only Jews who are theologically sensitive can appreciate what the Church is trying to do in this statement. Of course, Jews have a different view than do Catholics about *how* God makes contact with us and *what* that contact consists of. By properly understanding what we hold in common with Catholics, we are better able to understand what makes us different from them. To assume we have nothing in common is as erroneous and spiritually dangerous as to assume that there is nothing that separates us.

III

The Vatican statement is very significant, not only because it is immediately beneficial to Jews, but even more importantly because it is part of a larger process of the Church's coming to grips with her Jewish origins and her coexistence with the Jewish people until the end of history. I must state, though, in a spirit of friendly response, what I find lacking in the statement. This criticism is neither moral nor theological, but rather rhetorical. On one point in particular, I think the statement tries to say too much and thus does not say it well.

The statement raises the issue of the behavior of Christians who did resist Nazi policies, especially Nazi policies against the Jews. Thus it cites the 1937 encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge* ("with burning concern"), which condemned Nazi racism quite explicitly. And this was an encyclical, an official statement of Church teaching—written in German rather than the usual Latin—making its

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point directly to the Nazi powers in Germany. It seems quite likely that the actual author of this encyclical was Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, the Vatican Secretary of State, who was to become Pope Pius XII two years later in 1939. The Vatican statement goes on, especially in a long footnote, to note and defend the record of Pius XII with respect to the Holocaust.

There is a tremendous historical debate about Pius XII. On the one hand, it is well known that the Pope saved a number of Jewish lives and encouraged others who were doing likewise. On the other hand, Rolf Hochhuth's 1963 play *The Deputy*, which builds on the plausible assumption that the Pope did know about the mass extermination of the Jews from 1942 on, raised the question of why the Pope didn't publicly condemn what the Nazis were doing to the Jews. On that question, the jury is still out. If we assume that the Pope knew what was happening, then the question is whether his public silence was an act of moral cowardice or an act of moral prudence.

Those who make the case for moral cowardice argue that the Pope feared to upset the Nazis under whose control he was living during the German occupation of Italy. Furthermore, he had always seemed more concerned with the danger of communism, with its explicit anti-Christian and anti-Catholic bias, than he had been concerned with Nazism. After all, wasn't it the future Pope who, as Cardinal Pacelli the Vatican Secretary of State, had negotiated the concordat of 1933 with the new Nazi regime in Germany, an act that gave this questionable new regime much international respectability? And wasn't the Pope a good deal less reticent in condemning the evil of communism than he was in condemning the evil of Nazism, as evidenced by the fact that after the war he excommunicated any Catholic who voted for Communist candidates, something he never did to Catholic supporters of Nazism?

Those who make the case for moral prudence note that the Pope reasonably feared that many other Catholics, especially the clergy (who would be taken as his agents), would be killed if he spoke out. There is also, of course, the question of whether public criticism by the Pope of Nazi policies would have had any positive effect. It might well even have been counterproductive.

Because moral judgment in this case requires much more historical inquiry, one can hardly be conclusive about either judgment. The case is further complicated by the fact that we are dealing with a moral judgment that if unfavorable would be for a sin of omission rather than a sin of commission. No one could say that the Pope actually spoke or acted positively on behalf of the Nazi regime (as did some bishops), and certainly not on behalf of the crimes of the Nazis.

It is far more difficult to fix blame on somebody for what he or she could have done but did not do than it is to affix blame on somebody for what he or she should not have done but did do. Of course, that does not mean we cannot condemn sins of omission. We would morally condemn somebody who would, as Scripture puts it, "stand idly by the blood of [his] neighbor" (Leviticus 19:16). But it is not clear that that judgment can legitimately be made in this case.

We can hope that in time historians will be able to allow us to decide whether Pius XII was blameworthy, praiseworthy, or somewhere in-between. That cannot be done now. For that reason, and for the sake of presenting an undiluted theological-moral statement, the Vatican document would have been stronger and less open to the wrong kind of criticism from those hostile to anything Catholic if it had simply not raised an issue it could not possibly have treated adequately.

IV

Finally, the document asserts, "The Nazi regime was determined to exterminate the very existence of the Jewish people, a people called to witness to the one God and the law of the covenant." No Jewish statement could have enunciated more precisely why Jewish people exist in the world. Jews are committed to survival. Much of our language, uttered both to ourselves and to others, is the language of survival. Surely, that is quite understandable considering what the Jewish people have suffered, especially in this century. But survival for Jews is not enough. Jews always have to understand *for what*—better, *for whom*—we are surviving. Perhaps the true source of the Nazi venom against the Jewish people is that for which or for Whom the Jews are to survive.

This statement of the Catholic Church recognizes the chosenness of the Jewish people, the vocation of the Jewish people, a fact nothing short of *qiddush ha-shem*, "the sanctification of the name of God." If the Church, from the top down, recognizes this as the reason for the survival and continuing strength of the Jewish people, then, despite any reservations, Jews have to see this document as making a positive contribution to the always complex relationship between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church. It is a document Jews can and should embrace because its theological argument and conclusions have a resonance in our own theology and law. It is by no means the last word—nothing is in this world—but its integrity and wisdom should not be missed because of moral and political antagonism stemming from those having less integrity and less wisdom. FT

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Gregory VII and the Politics of the Spirit

Robert Louis Wilken

Midnight of December 31, 1999 is the symbolic ending of one Christian millennium and the beginning of another. (We say "symbolic," being well aware of the scholarly consensus regarding the date of Christ's birth, and the literal claim that the second millennium ends with the end of the year 2000.) Thinking about where we are at the end of the millennium assumes an understanding of who "we" are. We are those who have been formed, in ways beyond our sure discerning, by the thousand years now coming to a close. Our thinking about what may be requires a knowledge of what has been. The following is the first in a millennium series that will examine each century through the prism of a key figure. Robert Wilken considers the eleventh century and Pope Gregory VII. Next month: David Novak on the twelfth century and Maimonides.

— The Editors

Every marking of time has an arbitrariness about it, yet there seems to be something so large in its proportions about the commencement of a year that begins a century that inaugurates a millennium that it beguiles otherwise reasonable folk to imagine they are prophets. It is a temptation to be resisted. As enticing as it is to don the mantle of the seer and predict what will happen in the century to come, the greater part of wisdom is to look back, even far back, and greet the future with eyes focused by the past. The gift of discernment must be learned and if our eyes have not been trained to make out where we have been, they will be insentient to what is yet to be.

As we look back, however, what we see will be filtered inevitably through the prism of our own time. For there is no past that does not have our present as its future, just as there is no future that will not have our present as its past. The story is told of the distinguished French medievalist, Jean Leclercq, who was interviewed by journalists at Boston's Logan airport on his arrival in the United States for a lecture tour. One member of the press raised his hand and asked: "Tell me, sir, what century do you think was the most important?" Leclercq listened intently to the question, paused for a moment, and then softly replied: "Dees wun!"

No apology is needed to begin with the present. So let us first fasten on those things in former times that seem uncannily familiar to sensibilities attuned to the experiences of our century. The exercise should prove an instructive introduction to the topic at hand, the great pope of the eleventh century, Gregory VII.

In thinking about the eleventh century, the first century of the present millennium, consider the following:

The Crusades began in the eleventh century. In 1095 Pope Urban II preached his famous sermon to a large crowd in a meadow in Clermont, France calling on Christians of the West to come to the aid of their brothers and sisters in the East and to recover the holy city of Jerusalem for Christian civilization. Four centuries earlier, in 634, Muslim armies had burst without warning out of the deserts of Arabia to conquer Damascus (635), Jerusalem (638), and other Christian cities in the Middle East, and within a few short years the vanguard of the new religion had swiftly swept across the ancient Christian lands, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor (Turkey), Egypt, North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria), only to be stopped by Charles Martel in 732 at the battle of Poitiers in southern France.

In the face of such energy and determination the settled Christian world, with the exception of Constantinople, seemed defenseless, and a great curtain

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was soon drawn across the Mediterranean Sea, Christianity on the northern shore, Islam on the eastern and southern shores. Not until the eleventh century was Christian civilization capable of mounting a countermovement. Many in the West today, embarrassed by the militancy and brutality of the Crusades, would prefer to forget them, but the idea of liberating the Holy Land united Europe in a collective effort that altered the course of our history. And Islam has not forgotten the Crusades. When Mehmet Ali Agca tried to kill the Pope in May 1981 a letter was found among his papers with the words: "I have decided to kill John Paul II, supreme commander of the Crusades."

Item: The conflict between Christianity and Islam promises to be the dominant religious struggle at the start of the new millennium.

The eleventh century also gave birth to scholasticism, a way of reasoning that was to shape the course of Western philosophy and theology through the seventeenth century and even into modern times. St. Anselm, the most original Christian thinker between Augustine in the fifth century and Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, was born in 1033 and his intellectual activity spanned the eleventh century. His philosophical essays *Monologion* and *Proslogion* and his theological treatise *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man) helped lay the foundation for the great flowering of Western thought in the next three centuries.

Item: At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the new millennium we are witnessing a major rethinking of the nature of human reason, and in particular how it functions in religious thought. The hegemony of the Enlightenment model of autonomous and critical reason, reason disengaged from its object, is swiftly coming to an end. We are, perhaps, living at a time when the understanding of reason and its relation to faith will be transformed as profoundly as it was in Anselm's day. Last fall Pope John Paul II issued a new encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*. It may be the last papal encyclical of the millennium, and it is not insignificant that it deals with the relation of faith and reason, anticipating a discussion that will certainly accelerate in the new century.

The eleventh century was a period of intense spiritual vitality, particularly within the monastic communities. Monasticism changes the society even as it retreats from the world, and the changes in the monasteries provided the immediate background for the reforms of the popes. At the Benedictine monastery at Cluny in France, under the leadership of abbots Odilo and Hugh, a great reform movement reached the zenith of its influence in the Church and on society. St. Bernard, one of the most charismatic figures in Christian history, was born in 1090, and the Cistercians, the monastic movement with which he became associated, was founded in 1098 at Citeaux (*Cistercium* in Latin, hence the name Cistercians) by Robert of Molesme. Within a few decades the Cistercians, who practiced a more austere (and in their view more authentic) form of Benedictine monasticism, established hundreds of religious communities all over Europe where men and women quietly pursued a life of prayer and contemplation. Over the centuries contemplative monasticism as represented by the Benedictines and Cistercians has displayed remarkable staying power and today remains a vital feature of Christian life.

Item: At the turn of the millennium even activist Americans are discovering the contemplative side of religion, as books about its many offshoots—meditation, centering prayer, solitude, and silence—beckon the browser in the religion and spirituality sections of our bookstores. In her best-selling book *Dakota: A Spiritual Biography*, Kathleen Norris found a kinship between life in her parental home in an isolated town on the border of North and South Dakota and a Benedictine monastery. In places "where nothing ever happens, that the world calls dull," she learned, like the monks, to wait for God and listen. The success of her book suggests that it is a message many are eager to hear on the eve of the new century.

The eleventh century marked the official division between the Eastern Christian Churches, what is today known as Eastern Orthodoxy, and the Catholic Church of the West claimed by Roman Catholicism and critiqued by the churches of the Reformation. For centuries these two large branches of Christianity had developed in different directions, in worship, in church organization, in language and culture, and in 1054 Rome and Constantinople formally broke off fellowship.

Item: As we look to the new millennium these two Christian communions are slowly and gingerly moving toward one another and looking anew at the obstacles that created and sustained the division, the *filioque* for example. It is too early to say that this deepest of all Christian divisions is beginning to heal, but there are signs that even if the twenty-first century does not bring reunion, it will lead to much closer rapprochement.

The eleventh century was a period of profound change and creativity in the understanding of ecclesiastical as well as civil law. For the first time in centuries legal scholars began to collect ancient Roman law codes, and at Bologna in northern Italy in the 1080s the inventive Guarnerius (Irnerius) attracted students from all over the Christian world to hear his lectures on Roman law. Prior to the eleventh century there was no concept of law as a body of principles, no one had attempted to organize and codify the prevailing laws, and there was no class of trained

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lawyers. Law had been seen as a product of the common conscience, not an expression of conscious reason or will, and legal scholars set about the task of reconciling contradictions, deriving principles, and drawing out conceptual implications of the ancient law codes. In the eleventh century law became a separate field of study with its own cadre of interpreters who applied the law to new areas of life.

Item: In our litigious society there is no area where the influence of the changes begun in the eleventh century is more obvious than in the practice of the law. Everything from the relation of members of a family to one another to the culture of the workplace in large corporations, from the great moral issues of our time to rights of professional athletes, becomes a matter to be adjudicated by lawyers and judges.

Yet, as significant as these developments were and continue to be, the commanding narrative of the eleventh century takes place in the life of a single person, a man who was more original than Anselm, more imperious than Bernard, and more courageous than a Crusader knight: the pope Gregory VII, also known as Hildebrand. So far-reaching was his effect on society and so eventful his influence on the Church that many have called him a revolutionary.

One historian considers his "revolution" the first of six that were to alter the course of Western society. In reverse chronological order they are the following: the Russian Revolution, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the English revolution of the seventeenth century, the Protestant Reformation, and the papal revolution that began with Gregory's pontificate in 1073 and ended with the Concordat of Worms in 1122.

Just how deeply Gregory marked his age and the centuries to follow can be seen by sampling what some historians in recent generations have said about him. The social and economic historian Marc Bloch wrote: The Gregorian reform displayed "a spirit more revolutionary than contemporaries realized. . . . Its essence may be summed up in a few words: In a world where hitherto the sacred and profane had been almost inextricably mingled, the Gregorian reform proclaimed both the unique character and the supreme importance of the spiritual mission with which the Church was entrusted." Joseph Strayer identified Gregory's reforms with the origin and development of the idea of the modern secular state. Heinrich Mitteis spoke of a "constitutional revolution" and a "revolution in political thought." Yves Congar, the theologian, argued that "the reform begun by St. Leo IX (1049-1054) and continued with such vigor by St. Gregory VII represents a decisive turning point from the point of view of ecclesiastical doctrine in general and of the notion of authority in particular." Gerd Tellenbach had this to say: Pope Gregory VII "stands at the greatest . . . turning point in the history of Catholic Christendom. . . . He was at heart a revolutionary; reform in the ordinary sense of the world . . . could not satisfy him." And Harold Berman, who proposed the scheme of six revolutions, wrote: "The first of the great revolutions of Western history was the revolution against domination of the clergy by emperors, kings, and lords and for the establishment of the Church of Rome as an independent, corporate, political, and legal entity, under the papacy."

Gregory was born in a small town in Tuscany in Italy sometime between A.D. 1020-1025. As a boy he was sent to Rome to live in the Benedictine monastery of St. Mary on the Aventine hill. He took religious vows in the 1040s and in 1046 was asked to serve as chaplain to Pope Gregory VI, who had been sent into exile in Germany by King Henry III. Ironically, Gregory's life would also end in exile. On the death of Gregory VI in 1049 Hildebrand returned to Rome and was soon made administrator of the papal patrimony, the vast estates in central Italy governed directly by the pope. (In the eleventh century the popes were no less temporal rulers than the kings and princes who governed the kingdoms of Europe.) Under the two popes who immediately preceded him, Gregory served as archdeacon of the Church of Rome and was a guiding spirit in the reform efforts of the papacy. In 1073 he was elected pope.

The capital fact of ecclesiastical life in the early Middle Ages was that the affairs of the Church were managed by kings and princes. This interference in the Church's governance was not, however, viewed as a matter of political power muscling in on the authority of the Church; it was rather the king's duty. Like the kings of ancient Israel, medieval kings were anointed at their coronation and invested with a spiritual as well as political mission. Among the peoples of northern Europe—the Germans, Franks, Celts, Welsh, Irish, Danes, Bulgars, et al.—the only real authority was that of the king or prince or khan, and missionaries soon learned that the way to reach the people was through the mind and heart of the king, or sometimes the body of the queen. (Some Christian queens, it was reported, refused to sleep with their husbands until they converted.) These new Christian kings became the Church's defenders and bankers and overseers as they donated their own resources to build churches, endow monasteries, and in other ways lay the foundations for a Christian society. As the supreme religious head of the people, the king appointed bishops and abbots, ruled on religious and liturgical matters, and sometimes presided over ecclesiastical synods. Kings viewed the bishops as their *adjutores*, helpers. Christopher Dawson, the medieval historian, once remarked that Charlemagne viewed the pope as his private chaplain. It was the king's business to govern, said Charlemagne, that of the pope to pray.

The system of ecclesiastical organization devel-

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oped in northern Europe fragmented the Church into regional jurisdictions defined by the territorial authority of the king or prince. Churches were often established by a wealthy landowner on land that was family property. Because the landowner constructed a church on his land out of his own funds, he considered the church his own property and reserved the right to nominate a priest to serve the people living on his land. Monasteries were expected to provide goods and revenue to the lord, and on occasion were used as dowries in royal marriages or as a source of soldiers for the prince's army.

The authority of the lord in ecclesiastical matters was symbolized by the practice of lay "investiture." This term originally referred to the ceremony in which a lord handed over land to a vassal in exchange for an oath of fealty. As a symbol of the transfer the lord would give the new vassal a staff or a sword or a spear. In time a similar practice developed at the installation of a bishop. At the time of consecration the king or his representative handed over the symbols of the office to the bishop (or abbot), usually a staff or crozier and a ring, and the king said: "Receive the church." The bishop was then consecrated in an ecclesiastical rite by other bishops, but the symbols of authority had been transmitted by the king, not the bishops. It was obvious that this system encouraged greater loyalty to the local lord than to the pope or to the Church as a universal communion.

Immediately before Gregory's pontificate, and with his strong support, his predecessors had mounted an active program of reform, focusing particularly on simony (the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices) and on putting an end to clerical marriage (which encouraged seeking office for the financial rewards it offered the bishop's family). In 1049 celibacy was reaffirmed as mandatory for all clergy, and ten years later Pope Nicholas II laid down new rules that made the election of the pope the responsibility of the senior clergy of Rome, the cardinals (the term refers to the "hinges" between the bishop of Rome and the parishes), a practice that continues to this day (though cardinals today reside all over the world and merely hold title to parishes in Rome). By placing election of the pope solely in the hands of the cardinals, the new rules effectively excluded the emperor or a powerful king from controlling the election of a pope.

Even though Gregory had worked closely with his predecessors, he was dissatisfied with what they had accomplished. He was not a man of great learning, but he grasped what was before him in new ways. In his certitude about his mission, his decisiveness, and his personal charism, he stood apart from his fellows. His impatience with the pace of reform is evident in a letter he wrote to Hugo, abbot of the monastery at Cluny, two years after his election: "When I review in my mind the regions of the West, whether north or south, I find scarce any bishops who live or who were ordained according to law and who govern Christian people in the love of Christ and not for worldly ambition. And among secular princes I find none who prefer the honor of God to their own or righteousness to gain." A contemporary described Gregory as a tiger tensed for the leap.

The defining moment in Gregory's pontificate came over the election of a bishop in Milan in northern Italy, a city in the territory ruled by the German king Henry IV. At a synod in Rome in 1075, two years after his election as pope, Gregory issued a strongly worded condemnation of lay investiture. At first Henry IV, who hoped to be crowned emperor by the Pope, was accommodating. But when a dispute erupted in Milan over the appointment of the bishop, the King intervened to insure the consecration of his own nominee. Neither the King nor the Pope owned a character likely to allay strife. In a pointed letter Gregory reminded the King that he had no authority for such an action, and warned him that if he did not comply with the decree on lay investiture he would not only be excommunicated but also deposed. Here was a challenge without precedent. Popes had long been in the business of making kings and emperors, but no one imagined a pope could unmake a king. In Gregory's view a king forfeited his throne if he opposed apostolic decrees issued from Rome.

The King responded by calling his own council of German bishops who defiantly refused to bow to what they considered Gregory's imperious demands. One bishop was reported to have said that the Pope ordered bishops around as though they were his bailiffs. The King labeled Gregory a "false monk" who had "incited subjects to rebel against their prelates" and behaved as though the kingdom was his to give and take away and not at the disposal of God. He urged the Pope to step down. "Contrary to God's ordinance he desires to be king and priest at once." In words as mordant as anything Gregory wrote, the King taunted the Pope with *"Descende, descende!"* ("Step down, step down!")

Undaunted, Gregory declared Henry excommunicate and deposed him as king. In a letter defending his actions, he dwelt solely on the excommunication, tacitly acknowledging that he might have overstepped his authority in deposing the King. But the spiritual ban alarmed the bishops and nobles who had supported Henry. Within months they began to withdraw their fealty to Henry and urged him to seek absolution from the Pope. They issued an invitation for the Pope to come to a council at Augsburg in Germany.

But when the Pope reached northern Italy the promised escort had not arrived, and he took refuge in the castle of his friend Countess Matilda at Canossa. Here the famous confrontation between pope and king took place. The King, abandoned by his nobles and bishops, decided to approach the Pope as a penitent and ask forgiveness. In January 1077, in the dead

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of winter, he crossed the Alps and after reaching the courtyard of the castle where the Pope was staying, the King stood barefoot in the snow for three days waiting for Gregory to respond.

So unforgettable was the confrontation at Canossa that it has entered indelibly into the memory of Western civilization, especially among its statesmen and religious leaders. Some invoked Canossa when Fidel Castro met the Pope in Havana last January. In the Kulturkampf between Prussia and the Church in nineteenth-century Germany, Bismarck is reported to have said, "We will not go to Canossa." There, at a castle in the mountains of northern Italy, the two great authorities of medieval society, pope and emperor, priest and king, *sacerdotium* and *imperium*, met face to face, each testing the other. The conventional retelling of the story focuses on the King standing barefoot in the courtyard, but the real drama may have been taking place in the Pope's chambers within the castle. The three days' wait was as much a sign of Gregory's irresolution as of the King's humility. Gregory knew full well that the King had made the journey in part because of his dwindling support in Germany, but once the political winds shifted, as they certainly would if he were absolved, the King could hardly be expected to be so compliant. Yet Henry came as a son of the Church asking absolution. How could a priest turn away a penitent? Finally the Pope called for him, the castle doors were opened, and the King was granted absolution—not, however, without the Pope extracting an oath from the King that he would abide by papal decisions in the future.

By coming to Canossa and submitting to Gregory Henry acknowledged the Pope's right to judge kings. But Gregory's victory was chimerical—at least in the short run. Once Henry was granted absolution, he returned to Germany as king, legitimated by the Pope. In the meantime, however, Henry's enemies had elected a new king and presented the Pope with a dilemma. Whom should he recognize? Unfortunately, Gregory chose the new king, Rudolph; he even imprudently predicted Henry's imminent death. Henry, however, remained robustly healthy, while Rudolph died in battle. This was a costly misstep and an ominous portent. Never again would Gregory regain his balance. Soon opinion began to shift away from the Pope toward Henry, and the King, riding a wave of popularity, appointed an anti-pope (Clement III). Abandoned by his cardinals, Gregory was forced to take refuge in the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome near the Vatican, under the protection of the hated Normans who had occupied and sacked the city. He finally fled to Norman territory in the south of Italy, a state he would not have recognized a few years earlier. In May 1085 Gregory died in Salerno with the words of the psalmist on his lips, "'I have loved justice and hated iniquity'; for that reason I die in exile." Ironically, the pope who most identified with St. Peter did not die *apud sanctum Petrum*.

Clearly the measure of Gregory's greatness is not to be sought in the immediate events that ended his pontificate. When he died there were few signs that his policies would triumph. Yet he knew the future belonged to him, and in his letters he seemed conscious his words would one day become authoritative. To some his final words are taken as a cry of defeat, even despair, but they might just as well be read as a shout of victory. Martyrdom is not a sign of defeat. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," said Jesus in the beatitudes. Gregory's words have been taken as an apt epitaph for martyrs, and they appear often in collections of famous last words. The great Belgian historian Henri Pirenne, who was deported to Germany during World War I, said that he found comfort in Gregory's final words during his exile in Germany. As Gregory had demanded that kings and princes be obedient to truth, so he willingly imposed the same conditions on himself, remaining faithful to the end.

But, one might ask, faithful to what? Gregory would have said: to the freedom of the Church, an *ecclesia libera, casta, et catholica*, a Church that is free, pure, and catholic. His predecessors had centered their reform efforts on simony and clerical marriage, and Gregory was not indifferent to these problems. But the circumstances of his pontificate as well as his own genius led him to frame the issues in a new way. In his hands reform was not primarily an affair of the moral or spiritual life; it had to do with the right ordering of Church and society. In a radical departure from recent ecclesiastical custom, Gregory had stripped the king of his spiritual authority and reduced him to the status of a simple layman. The old complementarity of pope and emperor came to an end. Once the king had been directly accountable to God; now he was accountable to the pope.

By desacralizing the authority of the king, Gregory disengaged the spiritual world from political control (at least in theory) and set in motion forces that would alter not only the self-understanding of the Church but also of the state. The medieval kingdoms were religious states and the king, as head of the people, was the supreme authority in religious as well as in political matters. If spiritual governance was now solely in the hands of the bishops and pope, kingship had to be understood differently and new foundations laid for the political authority of the state. Paradoxically, as the Church became a sovereign body with its own head, administrative structure, body of law, and courts, its very existence gave impetus to new political ideas that would eventually give rise to the modern state. As the medieval historian K. Leyser has written, "Political ideas in the classical sense only appear in the polemics of the eleventh and early

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twelfth centuries incoherently, in flashes. . . . There [was at that time] no theory of the secular state as such, but as a result of the great crisis it was all ready to be born." Deprived of its spiritual authority, the state was forced to conceive of itself anew as a corporate body independent of the Church. In this sense the origins of the modern (and secular) state are to be traced to Gregory VII and the Investiture Controversy.

Gregory knew that the customs prevailing in the Church and society in his day had no foundation in ancient Christian tradition. In one of his letters he says: "Christ did not say 'I am custom,' but 'I am truth.'" The words are not original. They go back to Augustine, and can be found in earlier writers, Cyprian and Tertullian. But their application is new. What was considered ancient tradition, Gregory denominated custom—practices that had developed over the last several centuries in northern Europe. They were not apostolic. Like all great figures in the Church's history, Gregory knew that faithfulness did not mean slavish obedience to current practice. Faithfulness to tradition, by contrast to preservation of custom, required discernment of the deeper meaning of the faith amidst the vicissitudes of time. By challenging the customs of his time Gregory wished to build a bridge over the centuries to the more authentic truths that animate Christian life.

Gregory's letters reproach the King with pronouncements on the freedom of the Church. "Let him [Henry] no longer imagine that Holy Church is his subject or his handmaid but rather let him recognize her as his superior and his mistress." He speaks plainly and bluntly, eschewing euphemisms. But his imperiousness is not just a polemical strategy. He has a vision of the Church as a corporate and sovereign body in its own right. Christianity is not just the spiritual dimension of the social order; it creates its own social and political order. Bishops and pope, not princes, constitute the Church; they, not kings, stand in succession from the apostles. Only bishops can invest bishops in their office; kings have no such authority. Investiture, if you will, comes from Christ; it is not mediated by the king. The authority of the bishop is not conferred from above; it comes through the line of bishops stretching back through time to the apostles and to Christ. Hence the one who bears office is not simply a spokesman for the apostles; in his person he is their embodiment and sacramentally makes present the reality of Christ in the world.

Like any corporate body, the Church could not exist without a head. In 1075, two years after he became pope, Gregory jotted down a series of theses, a set of talking points for his own reference to be drawn on in letters or set forth in canonical form in papal decrees. Some of the points are the following: That the Roman bishop alone is by right called universal; that his legate, even if of lower grade, takes precedence in a council over all bishops and may render a sentence of deposition against them; that the Bishop of Rome alone may depose and reinstate bishops; that to him alone is it permitted to make new laws according to the needs of the times; that he may depose emperors; that no judgment of his may be revised by anyone, and that he alone may revise the judgments of all.

On first reading Gregory's theses sound revolutionary, and there can be no question that in the annals of the Church's earlier history there is nothing to match these extraordinary claims. Yet it was only as Gregory was faced with specific cases that he invoked his principles, and he was careful to document his claims by citing earlier canonical authorities and precedents. He saw, as no one had before him, that the pope had to be more than a symbolic head of the Church. The Bishop of Rome was not simply the court of last appeal; the pope was called to *govern* the universal Church. He alone was charged to care for all the churches. Unless the Church of Rome actually bound the churches in every part of the world together in an organic body and the pope exercised jurisdiction, all talk of the Church as a worldwide communion—i.e., as catholic—was illusory. The Church needs a real, not honorary, head.

Gregory had a kind of mystic identification with St. Peter. When his decrees are disregarded he says that Peter has been offended; he presides over synods "under the power of St. Peter"; he forbids a candidate for bishop to accept the office "by the apostolic authority of St. Peter"; and he asks bishops to "swear fealty to St. Peter." So complete is the identification with St. Peter that he speaks of Peter "now living in the flesh." In defending his deposition of Henry he cites the words of Jesus: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 16:18). And then he asks, "Are kings excepted here? Do they not belong to the sheep which the Son of God committed to St. Peter?"

Because Christ had given the rule of the Church to one man, Gregory reasoned that the Church was not a communion of local churches; it was a universal fellowship apostolic in origin and catholic in scope. Peter not only symbolized the unity of the Church, his authority allowed the pope to govern as its head. "God gave the power of binding and loosing in heaven and on earth to St. Peter"—and, Gregory adds, *principaliter*, as prince. As these ideas began to take root in the consciousness of the bishops and popes who followed him, the Church acted more and more as an independent corporation defined legally and administratively.

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There was, however, a price to be paid. By conceiving of the Church in constitutional and juridical terms, albeit for the purposes of liberating the clergy to carry out their spiritual activities, Gregory set in motion ideas that subtly altered the way the Church was understood. In the centuries that followed, as canon lawyers scoured earlier sources to provide a legal basis for papal authority, the Church came to be viewed less as a spiritual fellowship than as a hierarchical and juridical corporation composed of clergy and bishops and pope. Gregory has little to say about the laity in his letters, and his reforms helped create a sense of the clergy as a distinct class united with the pope but separated from the laity, who occupy a lower place.

Yet Gregory's preoccupation with the constitution of the Church cannot be dismissed simply as an unwelcome inheritance from medieval times that needs, in a more enlightened age, to be displaced by a spiritual conception of the Church. Religion, like culture, does not float free of institutions. Without the discipline of law and the structure of institutional life, our energies are dissipated and our lives impoverished. Whatever else the Church is, it is very much an institution. Nor are institutions simply instrumental. They tutor our affections and lift us beyond ourselves. As Cardinal Newman once remarked, we need objects on which our "holier and more generous feelings may rest. . . . Human nature is not republican." It is one of the persistent falsehoods of our time that the less institutional the Church, the more spiritual it will be.

Augustine's metaphor for the Church was a "city," and one way of reading his great work the *City of God* is to see it as a defense of the social and even political character of Christianity. Christianity is not a set of ideas, it is a new kind of community. The philosophers, wrote Augustine, had taught that the "happy life is social." But "we insist on that even more strongly than they." "How could that City have made its first start, how could it have advanced along its course, how could it attain its appointed goal, if the life of the saints were not social?" What Augustine expressed theologically about the Church, Gregory VII understood juridically and legally. His genius was to discern that this body, this society, this city, required constitutional form. That his legacy, under different circumstances, may have seemed at times to alter in questionable ways the character of the community whose life he sought to order does not diminish the profundity of his insight nor obscure the clarity of his vision. FT

Instant Replay

Staying home was easy
after the pulling guard
faked me wide
twice before half,
and the tailback cut back
and cleated the grass
I bulldozed with my nose.

I never forgot to hold my breath,
not even the first time
my father tossed me
off the deep end, *Sink*
or swim, he barked, and I sank
into his will and stayed at home,
a loyal son to my father,

who proved last month
history doesn't always repeat—
dying, he stiff-armed the tackler
and dashed around end
out of bounds,
up through the stands
and over the distant hills.

Walt McDonald

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So You Want to Go to College

Gilbert Meilaender

In February 1997 the *Chicago Tribune* carried a front page article on recent moves in some colleges and universities to develop programs in gender studies. For those who have spent years in the academy this movement is old hat and does not occasion much surprise. What caught even my jaded eye, however, in the midst of a listing of several academic institutions beginning to develop such programs, was the following item:

> At New York University, a Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies is being formed to study women and men as well as homosexuals, bisexuals, and transsexuals—so called "queer studies," which have experienced a burst of growth in the last few years. The NYU executive search team hopes to include candidates for the directorship who have surgically changed their sex.

My first thought, given the continuing tough job market in academia, was to picture despairing Ph.D.'s pondering whether the time had come to begin hormone treatments. But, of course, one can also read this as a reductio ad absurdum of the contemporary state of the academy in this country.

Into such a world has come in recent years a proliferation of college guides—aiming to tell would-be students and their parents what they need to know about the choices before them. And in a world in which a college degree has become—probably foolishly and unfortunately—a kind of "credential" one needs to gain employment (even employment for which the degree provides precious little preparation), students and parents are wise to ponder their options. Of considerable help in that task will be this most recent entry into the college guide market, which has been compiled and produced by the staff of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. ISI has a long history of working with college students and faculty, it brings a distinctly conservative perspective to the task of producing such a guide, and it has clearly put a great deal of time and energy into the project. Because of its long history, ISI has many contacts—both faculty and student—on campuses around the country, and a reader of this Guide will see that a great deal of information has come from actual interviews conducted with those who teach and learn on the respective campuses.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLEGE: THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT AMERICA'S TOP 100 SCHOOLS. Compiled by the Staff of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. Introduction by William J. Bennett. *Eerdmans. 680 pp. $25.*

A few caveats are probably in order. I'm not persuaded that the one hundred colleges discussed in this Guide are really the top one hundred in the country. If one were going to select solely in terms of academic quality, there are certainly some schools omitted that ought not be. The Guide does not explain in any detail its principle(s) of selection, though in his Introduction William Bennett gives a general sense of how the choices were made:

> The principle of selection . . . is eminently practical: of the one hundred institutions covered, the majority—about eighty—were chosen according to competitive admissions figures. These are, quite simply, the most selective schools in the country. . . . The remaining twenty institutions constitute a special list of colleges recommended by the editors as beacons of excellence in preserving the liberal arts tradition.

Nor does the Guide directly tell us much about what

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constitutes a good college education, though it tells us a good bit indirectly through its comments on the various schools. In the editors' "How to Use This Guide" readers are clearly informed what its central focus will be: It will tell "where you will be able to find the liberal arts tradition at our nation's elite institutions of higher education." In the Guide, this means something quite specific—a core curriculum in which students do common reading in (classic) texts of the Western tradition. That focus raises a number of questions, many of which I take up below.

One other caveat is worth mentioning—and at this point I find the parent in me and the professor in me difficult to reconcile. In his Introduction, Bennett suggests that "if there is ever to be genuine, long-lasting education reform, parents and students will have to become shrewder and better-informed education consumers," and he expresses the hope that this Guide may aid in that endeavor. The parent in me understands and appreciates this claim. The professor, though, has more hesitation. Especially in a Guide dedicated to upholding the merits of a liberal arts education, one might look for some caution about thinking of students (and their parents) as "consumers" of higher education. Indeed, that kind of attitude may be almost as destructive of genuine academic life as is the current "politicization" everywhere so prevalent. How to overcome this tension between parent and professor I do not know for sure, but I doubt whether academic institutions that think of themselves simply as responding to consumer pressures are likely really to sustain high-quality education in the liberal arts.

At any rate and caveats aside, in part this Guide is intended to do and will do what a guide is supposed to do—provide parents and students with information they may well desire about colleges and universities they are considering or might consider. For each of the one hundred colleges discussed the Guide provides information and comment under four headings: 1) an introduction to the history and "current climate" of the institution; 2) a discussion of the school's academic requirements and faculty; 3) a comment on the "political atmosphere" (e.g., speech codes, recent controversies about "political correctness," etc.); and 4) information about student life (e.g., clubs and organizations, housing options, surrounding environment).

The schools discussed cover a wide range of types and sizes: large state universities and smaller private universities, small elite liberal arts colleges, institutions that retain a strong church connection, a few schools that self-consciously teach the "great books." No one could be intimately acquainted with all one hundred of the institutions included. A small number of them I know very well though, and I have at least a passing acquaintance with a larger number. Where I can judge, the Guide seems to me, on the whole, quite accurate and trustworthy. Its discussion of "academic life" at each of these schools is often quite specific. That is, it will mention professors who are especially good or to be sought out. (It is not always clear whether these are especially eminent faculty, particularly good teachers, or simply "trustworthy" members of the faculty—though, of course, there is no reason why someone cannot be all three of these.)

At least as helpful, I am inclined to think, will be the information in the sections on "political atmosphere" and "student life." For better or worse, going to college means *living* in a place for four years, often living with others in very close quarters, and—the decline of in loco parentis notwithstanding—being "governed" in many respects by mid-level administrators in offices of student and residential life. One can generally avoid far more easily the bad class or bad professor than one can avoid being submerged in the general ethos of a campus.

In this respect the Guide's steadfast commitment to a core curriculum sometimes seems to outweigh its appreciation for the importance of a school's overall ethos. Thus, for example, the long-standing commitment of Columbia University to a serious core curriculum causes the Guide to conclude that "the liberal arts tradition has survived better at Columbia than at most places." Yet Columbia is also, as the Guide notes, a campus dominated in many respects by groups on the "cultural left." It is, for example, on the cusp of what is becoming a growing movement in that it has a university-approved student organization dedicated to discussing and promoting bondage, domination, and sadomasochism. Does a serious core curriculum make up for this? Which, in the long run, has a greater effect on the character of students? Relatively few students, of course, are likely to become serious devotees of BDSM. Relatively many, however, are likely to make their peace with the ethos by becoming relativists of a kind all too common in colleges and universities. Such practices are not for them, but, on the other hand, they cannot say they are wrong for others. *Consent* becomes the sole moral value in such a world—and it is not surprising that relatively young students should feel driven to a morality in which consent always has trump. In this way our valued tradition of political liberalism seeps into the whole of the moral life and the structure of our institutions.

For reasons that puzzle me a little the Guide is generally positive about fraternities and sororities and generally critical of institutions that have sought to eliminate them. Sometimes in this connection the Guide has a serious point to make. For example, noting that Carleton College prohibits fraternities and sororities, the Guide quite acutely notes the irony that these organizations are banned because they are considered "closed," while Carleton approves and

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fosters "diverse" groups such as racially segregated organizations. But it also characterizes Bowdoin's recent decision to outlaw fraternities and sororities as "a rather totalitarian act for a group of people who state their commitment to freedom, choice, and individual rights." Perhaps it is true that institutions at which consent has become the only shared value do act paradoxically in banning Greek life. Nonetheless, the Guide does not really desire colleges in which no heed is paid to the overall ethos or atmosphere of the place. And once we grant that such attention should be paid, the case for fraternities and sororities needs some defense. At least to the outsider it is not always clear that they foster traits of character we should want to be defending.

A very instructive feature of the Guide is that it pays attention to the physical appearance of campuses—not in every case, but in many. Thus, it notes of Rhodes College, located in Memphis, Tenn., that it "has stuck with a campus plan that calls for beautiful neo-Gothic buildings rather than the more contemporary (and less expensive) institutional buildings now in favor on college campuses. The result is not only a truly lovely campus, but one where the surroundings elevate the mind." Or again, it notes quite rightly that the "Collegiate Gothic buildings" of Kenyon College "are stunning." Or, to take a contrary example, it notes of the University of Dallas—a school whose academic program is highly praised in the Guide—that, as a result of its relative financial woes, "many campus buildings need renovation." In general, and apart from any particular judgments, it is heartening and useful to see this emphasis in the Guide. A campus should have nooks and crannies, trees and quadrangles, buildings that invite leisured reflection—and the Guide gives heed to such features.

In his short introduction, Gregory Wolfe, Editor-in-Chief of the project, suggests that the Guide may serve to do more than simply provide the kind of information I have noted thus far. It may also provide "a comprehensive survey of the state of higher education in America." That invites us to reflect on larger issues and judgments, often implicitly embedded in the Guide's comments, about what constitutes a good education. Some of these issues are well worth our attention, and, despite my considerable sympathy for the perspective that underlies this Guide, I think we need to ask some hard questions about the view that, for the most part, underlies its discussions of "academic life" at the respective institutions.

We can begin with the Guide's clear, if often implicit, advocacy of what it likes to call a "true core curriculum": a shared core of important texts that is much more than a set of distribution requirements and more than a supposed core (e.g., at Harvard) which in fact allows so much choice that no shared body of knowledge is conveyed. Indeed, at some points the Guide even seems to think that these texts should be read without the benefit of secondary sources ("'unfiltered by textbooks and prejudices,'" as a graduate of Thomas More College who is quoted puts it). But, of course, there is no reason to suppose that the student who takes on the great books without help from (perhaps) lesser thinkers who have written about them will do so free of prejudices. True enough, textbooks that merely summarize views of thinkers are no substitute for careful reading of hard texts. But there is much useful secondary literature that does not fit the textbook model. The trick is to learn a willingness to approach old texts as if they have something to teach us. Secondary sources may sometimes get in the way of such receptivity, but they may also sometimes assist it.

More important, devotion to a "true core curriculum," as the Guide envisions it, seems inevitably to favor "generalists" and to cut against "mastery" of a particular subject matter. I am not sure there is anything more liberating about knowing a little about many things than knowing much about a few things. In a world in which there is far more to be learned than any of us can manage, there is something to be said for knowing what we do not know and knowing also, at least with respect to one discipline, what it means genuinely to know something. For the same reason much of the talk about inter- or multidisciplinary study now in vogue ought to be viewed with skepticism. The notion that those who have not yet advanced very far in any discipline should be prepared to do genuinely interdisciplinary work is not very persuasive. Hence, the animus against specialists and in favor of generalists needs more defense if it is really to be seen as essential to a liberal arts education.

Curiously, however, what the Guide tends to overlook in its advocacy of a core curriculum is precisely the current state of the academy in this country. On the whole, the Guide is not happy with the tenor of the faculty at many of our very best institutions. Yet, if a true core curriculum were to be put in place, those faculty are the people who would be deciding what "common reading experience" to require of "all students." Whatever might be the case in the best of all possible worlds, why should we think such a curriculum would be a good thing in the world we actually inhabit? There are very few institutions in this country—though there are a few, often church-related—whose faculties I would more or less trust to develop a coherent and sensible body of common, required reading. Most of the time what is likely to result from such an attempt is a set of readings designed to satisfy as many different ideological constituencies as possible, a kind of mishmash of readings that become hoops through which students must jump. In most of our colleges and universities today we would be far wiser to argue against core curricu-

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la—and, even, to argue for only the most minimal of distribution requirements. Then the good students will at least be set free, and perhaps with some good advice and a little luck they will find the good courses taught by the good faculty identified in the Guide.

Consider, for example, the alphabetically first institution in the Guide—Amherst College, a selective and distinguished institution. The Guide reports—disapprovingly—that the only class required of students is a seminar in the first year, and even for that a number of seminars are taught on different topics, any of which will meet the requirement. Apart from that: "Amherst does require thirty-two courses for graduation—and that's it." What the Guide thinks bad, however, I tend to think good. Four courses per semester—that sounds about right. (Students who take more often learn less—and have less time for the kind of casual intellectual browsing that education also needs to involve.) The opportunity to sample where one will and acquire mastery where one will. (Why, for instance, does the Guide regard as a "failing" the very opportunity to take courses on a "pass-fail" basis? Overused it is a bad idea. But used properly it encourages students to sample what they might otherwise avoid.) The chance especially for the best students—and there will be degrees of excellence even at an Amherst—to find and take more than one class taught by Hadley Arkes, Robert Hilborn, Rebecca Sinos, and the other "outstanding professors" noted by the Guide.

One distribution requirement we probably need. Very likely we need a requirement that students take at least a few courses in the natural sciences. We need that because (a) it is there more than the humanities that academic standards and serious grading practices have been maintained, (b) it is there that one tends to encounter some of the brightest, most disciplined, least "trendy," and most religious students and faculty, and (c) it is there that the curriculum must be rather vertically structured and students cannot simply dip in at one place or another. Apart from that, however, in most of our colleges—and certainly in the best—I would argue that a wise strategy at the present would be to defend only the most minimal of requirements. There are moments when the Guide recognizes this. Of Tulane, for instance, it says: "There is a widespread belief that implementing a core at this juncture in the university's history would be quite dangerous: given the number of radical faculty on campus, as well as the leftist leanings of the administration and its huge affirmative action machine, the potential for mistakes is too great to chance revamping the curriculum now." Those words have, I suspect, a more general applicability.

Related to the Guide's tendency to prefer a curriculum that creates generalists is its near animus against heavy emphasis on faculty research and publication. Thus, it will praise any college that does not "put publishing first and teaching second." That sort of formulation, of course, wins the argument a bit too easily. No one would, I suppose, deny that we need some kind of balance between teaching and publication, but a word needs to be said in behalf of serious publication requirements even at colleges that are far from being "research universities." Faculty members almost always know more than their students about the subject they teach. Were that not the case, it would be hard to know why students need them. (This fact makes more than a little humorous student evaluation forms that ask students to comment on the instructor's knowledge of the material.) It is, therefore, at least for some faculty, a rather "heady" experience to walk into the classroom. It is possible, all too easily possible, to misuse one's relatively greater knowledge in the service of ideological interests. It is all too pleasurable to be, day after day, the acknowledged expert. Attaching one's name to a published article or book changes things considerably. For all the flaws that academic publishing involves, for all the articles written to be read only by a handful of others, it is still true that within the academy as a whole there will be smart people, knowledgable people, who will disagree—and may say so in print. In short, publishing requirements keep us honest. That is why they are important and needed. Moreover, it is often the most dedicated and hard-working teachers who are the most widely published scholars. I think the Guide too readily assumes that rigorous publication standards are detrimental to the health of the academy.

For reasons that are never fully developed in the Guide and that puzzle me, it also seems to assume that the best college teaching will not take the form of lecturing but will, presumably, involve small discussion classes. Thus, for example, it says that the senior faculty at Harvard "are starting to forget about *educating*. . . . Well-known scholars, of which Harvard has a boatload, mainly teach large lecture classes." What's to complain about? If this were the greatest of Harvard's problems, who could ever discourage a student from applying? Really smart students should be overjoyed at the opportunity to hear a series of lectures from Harvey Mansfield, Thomas Scanlon, or Jon Levenson. In *Coming Apart*, his "Memoir of the Harvard Wars of 1969," Roger Rosenblatt, reflecting first upon his own reasons for leaving teaching, turns to some wider reflections about the task itself. "What the brighter students honor in their favorite teachers," he writes, "is the quality of worry. They like to see teachers worry about the material, and they like to overhear them worry. That, I think, is what the best teaching is—being overheard as one worries aloud about a subject." Worrying aloud about a subject while being overheard—overheard by students who are gradually acquiring the capacity to enter into this worrying by listening to one who is relatively skilled at it. That is not a bad description of lecturing, and there will always be an important

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place for it in college education.

Of course, this is not the only way to teach. St. John's College teaches its great books program almost exclusively in seminars; yet, consider how the Guide makes the point: "The seventeen to twenty-one students in each seminar sit in a circle, not to hear a lecture, but to discuss a central question raised by the 'tutor' regarding the text they have all read." As one who was a student in the late '60s and early '70s, I believe I can state definitively that sitting in circles is overrated. Moreover, this form of teaching, even in the hands of the expert teachers one is likely to encounter at St. John's, is not best for all sorts of material. Even for suitable material, it is not a method that always serves the educational interests of the best students, who may often find themselves frustrated with the progress of discussion. So some kind of balance among teaching styles seems to be what we ought really to be recommending.

About any number of the judgments offered above, I may be mistaken. And, given the diversity of colleges discussed in the Guide, it is to some degree impossible to generalize. Nevertheless, if we want to move beyond just picking a college to thinking about "a comprehensive survey of the state of higher education in America," these are some of the questions we need to be discussing. One thing is clear, though, and the Guide rightly notes it on several occasions. Over the past decade or more, there has been a "buyers' market" for faculty in the academy. There is, then, little excuse for schools that have tenured mediocre faculty or faculty who are chiefly committed to politicizing the curriculum in particular or the institution more generally. It is possible to do better. If we want to do better, however, we need to know what sort of faculty we seek and what kind of education we want. To stimulate our reflection upon such subjects this Guide will provide something like a cruse of oil that never runs dry. FI

Satan in the Desert

Satan on the hills at a high place
looking to restore some kind of order
to perspective: "Look kid," he says, "it's like this—
I make you an offer, you make a counter offer—
really, we shouldn't even be talking

you sure you haven't got an agent?"
Jesus looks out and lets his glasses
catch the last light on the mountains.
"I'm bigger," he says, "than all of this."
Then he jumps on the spot, not even near the edge

and Satan barely starts snapping his claws
for the ambulance, the greenmasked angels,
before he's realized the little sod
just pretended to lose what he'd always
had well in hand, feet firmly in the dust.

Satan sighs and considers lunch
back in J City where the Baptist
still ain't signed up. Jesus sings
and over clouds Satan's tail twitches
from the breeze of a coming rival player's outfit.

Crews start assembling round
the mock-up of a set and Satan wonders
what sequence his boys have dreamed up up there
for that crossed piece of firewood.
Rainclouds come and then a cloudburst

Satan wonders if that kid's alright out there
alone, "Sure," he says, "that kid was born
to rule the desert." Jesus claps his hands
and breaks the bread, the disciples chow down;
Judas goes out for a previous appointment.

The birds, hungry, wait on the branches.
Rainclouds swoop and swirl in the desert.
No one answers the calls of Satan's phone
left lodged in the cracks of the fountain.

Atar Hadari

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Books In Review

The Man Behind the Curtain

UNAUTHORIZED FREUD: DOUBTERS CONFRONT A LEGEND. Edited by FREDERICK CREWS. *Viking. 301 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Edward T. Oakes**

IN HIS BOOK *Modern Essays,* Cambridge University's distinguished literary critic Sir Frank Kermode called book reviewing—at least when honestly done and not just as an adjunct to the publishing world's blurb-making industry—a form of cultural hygiene. Under that rubric there are few book reviews that have had a more beneficial effect on the culture than Frederick Crews' three-part review of several books on Freud in the *New York Review of Books* in late 1993 and 1994.

Although criticism of Freud had been building for some time, even within the avowedly Freudian camp, direct attacks on the man and his methodology seemed—at least until the Crews articles appeared—to operate in some peripheral field of vision among the culture's central gatekeepers. Freudians could pretty much afford to do what in fact they did: take no more notice of these attacks (some of which were quite trenchant) than an elephant would a swarm of fleas. But the venue of the *New York Review* was different: not only did it have a large number of practicing psychotherapists among its large subscriber base, it had also in the past reviewed and discussed any number of books on Freud with no discernible vandalizing intent to destroy, Samson-like, the whole Philistine temple. Thus to let in a man of Crews' proven take-no-prisoners adamancy was, as he wryly says, rather as if someone had inadvertently let the American tomcat into Freud's ornate Viennese parakeet cage.

BUT WHAT hurt most was Crews' ability to marshal the many strands of the anti-Freud polemic and weave them into an unbreakable rope which he could then use, with inexorable logic and devastating rhetoric, to link Freud's protean methodology to that latest fad of our repellently therapeutic culture —the recovered-memory movement. The recovered-memory movement is an ugly and massively destructive trend among therapists —some of whose training borders on outright quackery—to ferret out "memories" of alleged instances of child abuse using methods that count the very *absence* of conscious memory of abuse as prima facie evidence that abuse occurred, evidence which a hectored and harassed patient (often under hypnosis and certainly awash in the stale waters of free association) eventually admits has been blocked by the "defense mechanism" of "denial." After that crucial threshold has been crossed, nonevidence becomes evidence for both patient and therapist, and with such "evidence" in hand, the two then betake themselves to court to accuse assorted loved ones, schoolteachers, and neighbors of some of the most implausible charges leveled since the Salem witch trials, charges which, even when thrown out of court for their very preposterousness, have already destroyed the lives of the accused.

Needless to say, the howls of execration that greeted these reviews were heard up and down Manhattan's West End Avenue and resulted in more letters to the editor than had ever been received by the journal in response to one of its articles. As might be expected, Crews defended himself admirably. But the gauntlet having been thrown down, Crews was also obliged to bring out in the near future a book-length work setting out in all its detail the case against Freud, one that would convince all but the most doctrinaire Freudian. This is just what the book under review provides.

It should perhaps be stressed at the outset that this book does not intend to be a time capsule of the case against Freud for the benefit of future historians. That is, Crews has assembled his essays not so much to pay homage to the best, most influential, or most technically thorough essays against Freud. Rather, he has deliberately chosen only the most accessible of essays for the general reader, which means that some of the most pioneering (and unsung) writers in the anti-Freud case might feel slighted, especially when they see secondary works summarizing their research included in their place.

But as Crews notes in his introductory essay, this collection has one eye cocked on the on-again, off-again Freud exhibit recently mounted by the Library of Congress. Amusingly enough, the exact date for its opening has had an uncanny way of shifting, rather like Freudian theory, in response to its critics. At first the exhibit was to have been mounted in the fall of 1996, but when critics accused it of being a complete whitewash designed to distract the general public from the now solidly established case against Freud, the exhibit curator promised a more balanced presentation. Pro-Freudians could hardly object, but when the Library announced the postponement of the exhibit, allegedly for lack of funds, pro-Freudians saw their public-relations chance and accused Freud's critics of that standard bogeyman, "censorship."

And then, not many months later, the exhibit was suddenly back on track, funds apparently in hand, but this time without the participation of anti-Freudians (except for the eleventh-hour admission of two critics), now thrown into confusion. Thus this book of essays

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J. *is the author of* Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar *and the editor of* German Essays on Religion, *both from Continuum.*

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forms a kind of anti-catalogue to the exhibit, to keep the general reader's mind firmly fixed on some truly unassailable evidence that the Library of Congress will no doubt have air-brushed from the portrait the public will gain of Freud.

FORTUNATELY, DESPITE these limitations of space and intended audience, the work of Adolf Grünbaum was not slighted; for not only is he perhaps the most consistent, the most thoroughgoing, and certainly one of the earliest of the critics against Freud, he is also, second only to Crews, the hardest to ignore. Grünbaum has impeccable credentials—he is the Andrew Mellon Professor of Philosophy and Chairman of the Center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Pittsburgh (still the nation's leading department in the philosophy of science) and also Research Professor of Psychiatry at the same school—and is possessed of a dry, no-nonsense (if rather Teutonic) style that makes his case even harder to refute, precisely for its lack of rhetorical verve.

Unlike Crews, who comes close to holding that Freud was a complete charlatan whose only virtue seems to have been a preternatural talent for bamboozling an entire century, Grünbaum is willing to concede some low-grade viability to such Freudian ideas as rationalization, projection, and reaction formation. Crews' own answer to Grünbaum's mitigating efforts resembles the old joke about the professor who wrote on a student's paper, "This work is both original and good. Unfortunately, the parts that are original are not good, and the parts that are good are not original." Most Freudian ideas that strike common sense as plausible in fact have a pedigree that well antedates Freud (such as the idea of the unconscious, a staple of Romantic aestheticism that can trace its genealogy as back as far as Plato's early dialogue, the *Ion*). The ideas of more recent vintage, such as the ones Grünbaum credits, can be found better expressed in Nietzsche or Henry James. And as for the rest of the package, the ideas that are original but not good? As Wittgenstein says in *Culture and Value*, "Freud's fanciful pseudo-explanations (precisely because they are brilliant) perform a disservice. Any ass can use these 'pictures' [from dreams and free associations] to explain symptoms of illness." Karl Popper was right: a theory that can't be falsified can't claim any scientific validity.

If Crews were not so effective in tracing the almost direct links between Freudian question-begging "explanations" and the recovered-memory movement, the story as it emerges in this engrossing set of essays would be quite droll. A standard comedy skit has the shrink slip out of the office for forty-five minutes while the patient is on the couch chatting away at the ceiling and free-associating his brains out, with *Herr Doktor* returning only to set up the next appointment. In a case of life imitating art, Crews cites a letter Freud actually wrote to his friend Wilhelm Fliess during one of his therapy sessions, a letter that begins: "I have at the moment a lady in hypnosis lying in front of me and therefore can go on writing in peace." Two paragraphs later, Freud insouciantly signs off: "The time for the hypnosis is up. I greet you cordially. In all haste, your Dr. Freud."

IN FACT, if there is any reader of this volume who finds himself resisting the relentless marshaling of evidence on display here, he has only to read the unabridged Freud-Fliess correspondence published by Harvard University Press in 1985, which at times seems as if it could be titled *Quack Speaketh Unto Quack*, so bizarre are the revelations it contains. (Needless to say, Freud destroyed Fliess' letters to him and tried to move heaven and earth to get his end of the correspondence burned as well. Unfortunately for him but luckily for history, Freud's letters to Fliess fell into the hands of Princess Marie Bonaparte of Greece; although she was an orthodox Freudian of the dreariest kind, she refused his request to destroy the letters, much to Freud's dismay.)

Particularly outrageous was the "treatment" of one Emma Eckstein, one of Freud's hysterical patients. Unfortunately for the hapless Miss Eckstein her diagnosis came during the period when Fliess' influence on Freud was at its greatest; and since Fliess, a nose surgeon, was at the time pushing his nutty theory that neuroses were located in something he called the "nasal reflex" and not where they are in fact located, in the personality and its complex history, Freud allowed Fliess to "cure" Eckstein's misery by removing the middle left concha of her nose. After an operation that Crews rightly calls entirely superfluous, this feckless nose surgeon immediately returned to his regular (mal)practice in Berlin, leaving Freud's already hysterical patient on the verge of bleeding to death because, in his typically quack way, Fliess had left a half meter of iodoform gauze in her nasal cavity at the conclusion of the operation. If that weren't outrage enough, Freud gradually stopped blaming *Fliess* for this surgical butchery and soon told his correspondent, in perhaps the most startling letter in the collection, that Eckstein was bleeding not from an incompetent operation but from an unconscious love-call to Freud himself!

It is a sign of how much fauna there is for the anti-Freudian to hunt in this grotesque menagerie that the Eckstein case is only alluded to on a few occasions in this scholarly brief against Freud. More inviting targets of the book include such obvious game animals as: 1) Freud's habit of using evidence gained in hypnosis and free association as confirmation of his theories despite his famous and flagrant habit of hectoring his patients to come up with just the response he was looking for; 2) his constant rewriting of the history of the psychoanalytic movement not just to favor his own innovations but to cover the tracks of his malpractice,

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exploitation, and duplicity; and 3) his lazy neurological assumption that infants have brains developed enough to sustain the emotional trauma he attributes to them, and that adults have brains built (to use Crews' fine phrase) like "cortical dominoes" such that Freud can go directly from a stray remark in a free-association session to some hypothesized infantile trauma. This procedure is what Wittgenstein wittily calls in *The Blue and Brown Books* the search for Mr. Nobody. We innocently say something like "there's nobody in the room." But then because the word "nobody" is grammatically a noun, we can too easily deck the word out with a gentleman's title and then suppose a being with that name is in the room. Freudian logic to a tee.

Again, this round-robin logic might be amusing if its effects weren't so damaging, a damage, moreover, that still lives on in today's headlines. But for readers who like their hilarity unalloyed, Crews opens the book with some published objections to his prior work from the Freudian guild, whose members predictably rise to the occasion. Since Crews is himself an atheist, one would think that the Freudians would at least not avail themselves of the old canard about neurotic religious motivations. Not so. Anyone seeking to introduce counterevidence into the standard Freud legend must, according to some Freudians quoted here, by that very fact be an ally of the Christian right or be introducing, in the words of one American analyst, a climate of fear not seen since the Ayatollah Khomeni's *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie.

BUT SURELY the winner in this stoop-to-anything, let's-see-how-low-we-can-go sweepstakes must be the writer who compared the anti-Freudians to latter-day Nazis on a witch hunt against "Freudian Jews," while the award for the most vulgar cry of anguish belongs to Peter Gay's expected (but nonetheless dismaying) charge that what motivates the anti-Freudians is not a concern for the truth but an infantile oedipal rebellion against Father Freud. And for an extra fillip of amusement, there is the Austrian government's post-Waldheim effort to rejoin the League of Civilized Nations through its recent canonization of Freud, an honor it bestowed on the Viennese doctor by putting his image on its fifty-schilling note, a move that would be roughly comparable to Yeltsin's post-Communist government putting Madame Blavatsky on the Russian ruble or Clinton currying favor with his disaffected New Age and feminist constituencies by ordering the Mint to coin Shirley MacLaine silver dollars.

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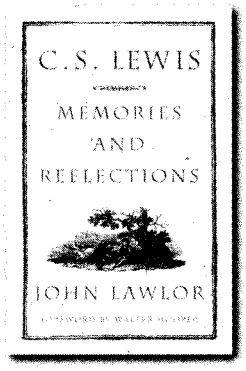

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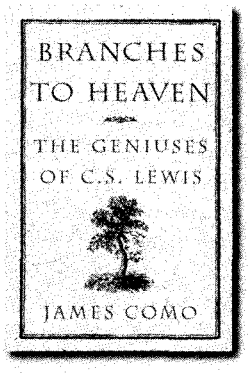

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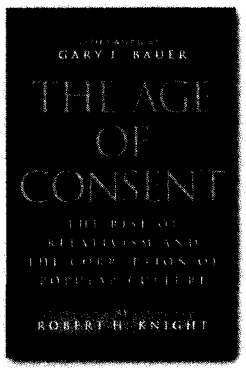

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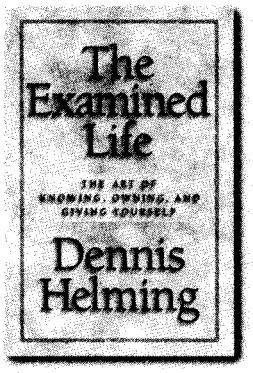

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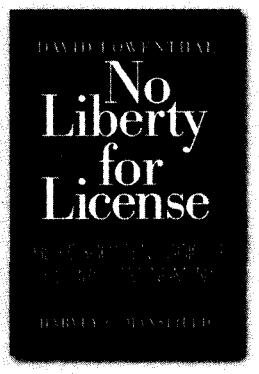

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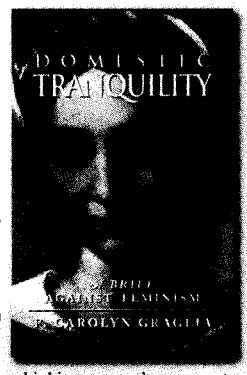

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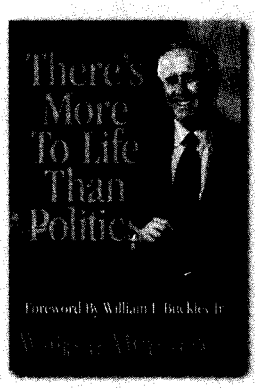

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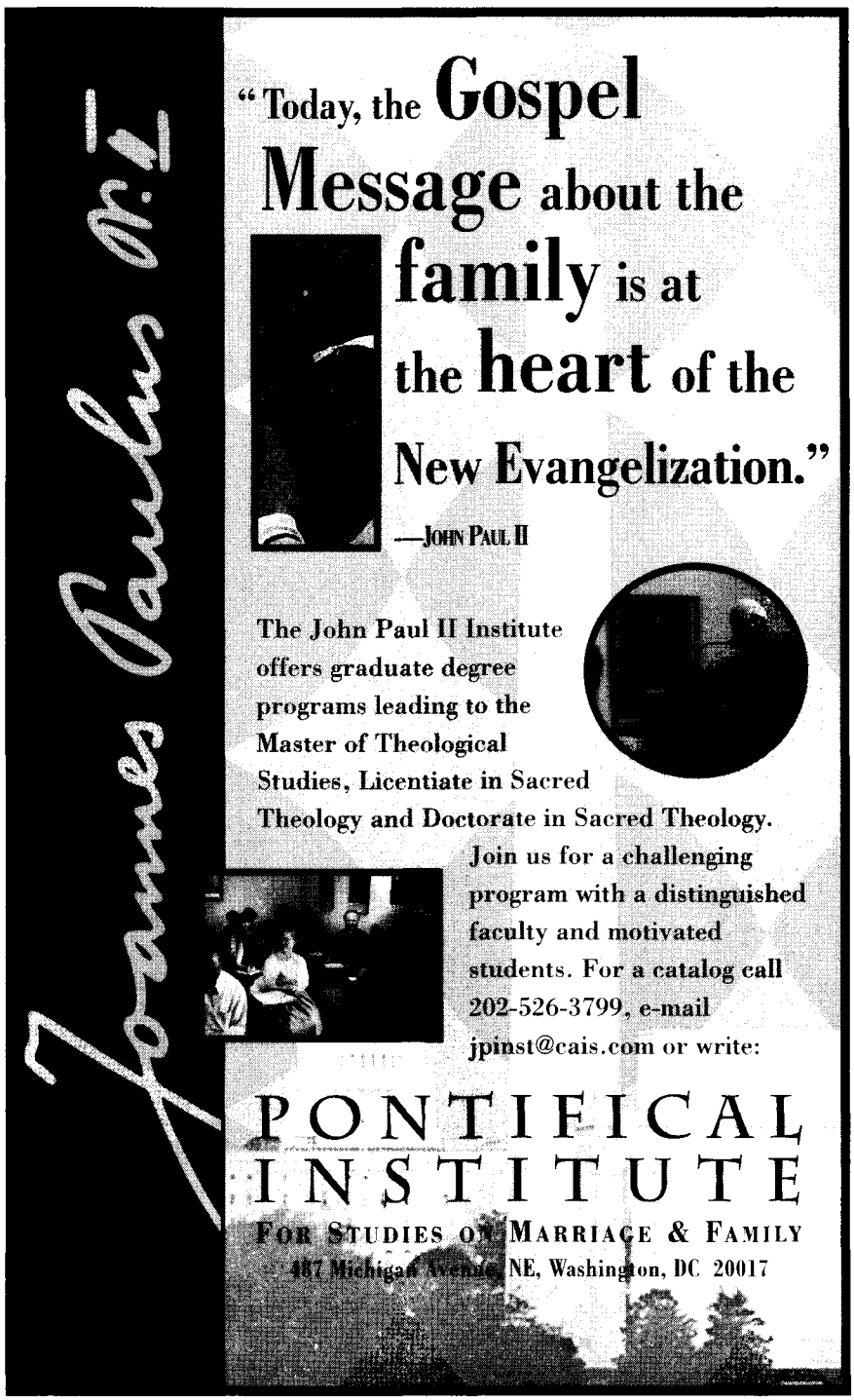
While reading this absorbing and consistently well-argued book I kept thinking of Crews' comparison of Freudianism at the end of this century with a late scene in the movie *The Wizard of Oz*. The four pilgrims—Cowardly Lion, Tin Man, Scarecrow, and Dorothy—have traversed the whole Yellow Brick Road and are finally allowed an audience with the Wizard, who is seen fulminating, amid smoke and mirrors, at the other end of his vast, resplendent throne room. Only the dog Toto notices that all this *son et lumière* is coming from a control booth manned by a doddering old man no more intimidating than a retired pigeon-feeder on a park bench. So too, the supporters of Freud have finally been reduced to hoping that we will obey the voice of the Wizard: "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain."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***Reviewed by* Avery Dulles**

CARL BRAATEN, long a respected voice in American Lutheranism, here offers a welcome distillation of a half century of theological study and reflection. By means of this brief but wide-ranging book we can renew our acquaintance with him as a student of Paul Tillich, as the author of a doctoral dissertation on Martin Kähler, as an early proponent of the "catholic" understanding of Luther, and as a maturing ecclesiologist in lively dialogue with Karl Barth, Eberhard Jüngel, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and George Lindbeck.

Revisiting territory covered in his early work on Kähler, Braaten here takes up the problem of the historical Jesus in the context of the so-called "third quest" now being conducted by responsible scholars (and not just by the Jesus Seminar). He holds fast to his original position, consonant with Kähler's, that the real Jesus cannot be delivered by scientific historical method divorced from faith. That method has built-in presuppositions that prevent it from satisfactorily engaging with saving events such as the Incarnation and the Resurrection. Its results, historically probable at best, cannot serve as foundations for faith. The Church and its tradition, according to Braaten, are intrinsic to the hermeneutic of historical inquiry into the Christ-event.

While he firmly accepts the authority of the Bible, Braaten is aware

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of the limitations of the formula "Scripture alone." He acknowledges that Holy Scripture, as a privileged distillation of early tradition, cannot be identified or rightly interpreted except in light of tradition. Holding that biblical hermeneutics must place itself within the living tradition of the Church, Braaten responds enthusiastically to the 1993 Instruction of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church." He approvingly quotes Pope John Paul II to the effect that biblical scholars must conduct their investigations within the framework of the Christian vision of reality.

REGARDING THE PROBLEM of faith and reason, Braaten sides with Tillich and Pannenberg against Barth and Jüngel. God, he holds with these mentors, can be approached through reason because "signals of transcendence" (to borrow Peter Berger's term) appear at the limit situations of human life. The idea of God springs spontaneously into the human mind, but for the full assurance that God is real we need the gift of faith, or else we might settle for God as a mere "regulative idea" or projection of the human psyche. Braaten's "new natural theology" is therefore a rather modest affair. Reason, for him, raises the question of God; faith gives the answer.

Building on his earlier investigations into the "catholic" aspects of Luther, Braaten stoutly maintains that Lutheranism was never intended to become a separate church in competition with Rome but to serve as a reform movement within the Church catholic. Like Lindbeck, he uses the metaphor of a government in exile. The Free French during World War II and the anti-Castro Cubans of today have a strong sense of their mission not to emigrate permanently but to return to their mother country. A Lutheranism that abandons the mother Church and settles for becoming just another Protestant denomination has betrayed its mission.

For the early Lutherans the only condition for reunion was that Rome should adhere to the gospel of justification by faith. After the reforms of John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council it becomes increasingly difficult, in Braaten's judgment, to answer the question whether there is still a need for Protestantism as an independent movement, criticizing the mother Church from outside rather than working as a leaven from within. The disputes about justification have been substantially narrowed by Lutheran-Catholic dialogues. The major difficulties today seem to be in the realm of ecclesiology rather than soteriology. Protestant churches, according to Braaten, incline toward a model of separation

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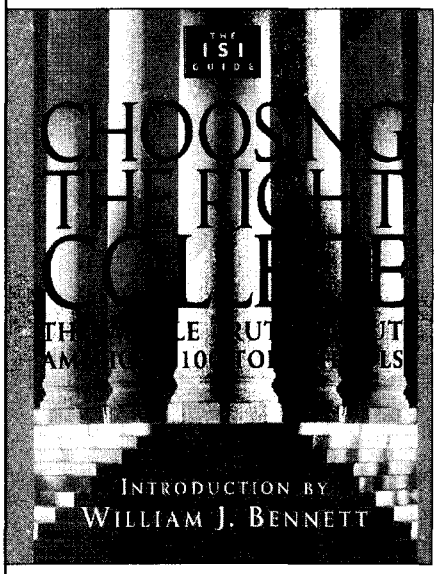

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between Christ and the Church, whereas Roman Catholicism tends toward a close identification between the two. Protestantism spiritualizes the true Church, whereas Catholicism tends to restrict the Church to its Roman realization. Braaten seeks to chart a mediating course in which both the gospel and the structures receive their due. While repudiating the idea of a "return" to Rome, he looks forward to a future union in which the two sides will converge toward the fulfillment of each.

REMARKABLE IN THIS book is the author's strong emphasis on magisterial authority. Three times he quotes from Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession to the effect that bishops by divine right have the office to preach, to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to condemn heresy, and to excommunicate the ungodly. Such authority, he asserts, cannot be given without ordination. One of the tragedies of the Reformation, in his view, is that it severed the links between ordination and magisterium. The laity cannot be expected to teach with authority when they have not received, by ordination, the charism from the Holy Spirit to be teachers of the Church. In expressing this criticism of contemporary Lutheranism, Braaten is consciously echoing the thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who complained that within Protestantism the concept of heresy had been lost. Lutheranism, according to Braaten, suffers from a "magisterial vacuum"; it possesses no concrete official and public locus of authority.

In the United States today, Braaten finds, the Lutheran churches have forsaken their catholic legacy. They are riddled with a kind of "lay liberalism" that gives in to the pressures of contemporary secular culture: relativism, radical pluralism, and the cult of purely personal experience. These weaknesses, he notes, correspond with those cited in 1928 by Erik Peterson in his exchange of letters with Adolf von Harnack. Peterson left the Lutheran fold and became a Roman Catholic because he was convinced that Lutheranism had cut itself off from its dogmatic roots. In the absence of an ecclesiastical magisterium, he contended, Protestantism was being tossed about by the contemporary Zeitgeist and was resymbolizing the historic faith according to the prevailing assumptions of modernity.

Braaten is impressed by Peterson's thesis that the evangelical (Protestant) church cannot take positions on relevant questions because it lacks a dogmatic basis. Many Lutherans in our day, he recognizes, agree with Harnack that Protestantism does not want to be a church in the Roman Catholic manner, since it repudiates all formal authorities. Lutheranism is

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still, in the expression of Harnack, "severely dependent on the remains of the Catholic tradition among us, as it were, on the aroma of an empty bottle."

Braaten frankly recognizes that "evangelical catholics" such as himself are a small minority within the Lutheran community. Only a few still want a Church built on dogma, sacramental realism, and the authority of sacramentally ordained bishops. His strategy is to reach out in ecumenical solidarity to like-minded Christians of other traditions. "We are perhaps at a time when renewal will be spurred by a variety of voluntary struggle groups, institutes, centers, associations, and perhaps even new seminaries that will spring up here and there to promote faithfulness throughout the Church to the word of God and to mine the ore of the great catholic and orthodox traditions, retrieving neglected treasures of the historic Church—dogmatic, institutional, liturgical, and sapiential." Such voluntary groups can surely raise questions and propose improvements, but can they bring about the radical structural changes that Braaten regards as necessary?

CATHOLICS OF THE Roman allegiance will be on guard against feeling Schadenfreude at the disarray that Braaten describes in contemporary Lutheranism. Catholics in countries such as our own are subject to all the cultural influences Braaten describes. They fall easily into the kind of appeasement and accommodationism he laments. Few are willing to take bold stands, as Braaten does, in the present "struggle for the soul of the Church." Orthodox Catholics are becoming almost as much a minority in their own theological community as are orthodox Lutherans in theirs. For this reason Braaten's proposals will strike a responsive chord. It is consoling to learn that there are kindred spirits across the aisle that separates Roman from non-Roman Catholics.

As a Lutheran, Braaten has one problem from which Roman Catholics are spared. Catholics are convinced that they still stand in an organization that was endowed by its founder with covenanted means of grace—doctrinal, sacramental, and ministerial—that enjoy a promise of unfailing divine assistance. Contemporary Lutheranism shows some evidence of seeking to acquire greater ecclesial density. As it moves from being a confession to being a communion, world Lutheranism looks more and more like a reduced replica of Catholicism, and by the same token looks less like the "reform movement" that Braaten describes. The Lutheran World Federation is beginning to act as a voice for world Lutheranism, almost as an oppo-

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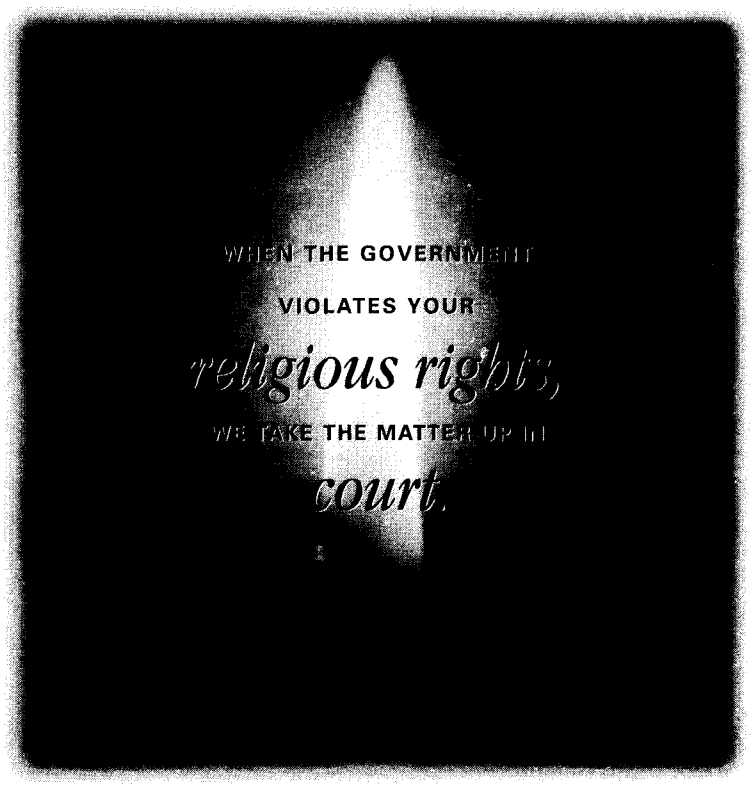
site number to the Holy See. But in the end it must be asked: Can Lutheranism give itself a doctrinal and sacramental authority that it does not currently seem to possess?

Braaten sees the advantages of the historic episcopate and of the Petrine office as the center of unity. But he evidently feels that he cannot join Rome since its hierarchy is guilty of authoritarianism. This is, no doubt, the characteristic failing of authority in the ecclesiastical as well as the civil realm. But proper and necessary exercises of authority will often appear authoritarian to those who are not favorably disposed to what is being said or done. Some tensions are inevitable; an authority that says and does only what people want is not an authority at all. While Christians should not throw away their God-given faculty of reason, they must recognize that submission and obedience are evangelical virtues, recommended by reason itself.

The questions I have raised in this review are not simply my own. To the author's credit, he raises them himself with courage, candor, and clarity. Even though I would answer some of these questions differently than Braaten does, I heartily recommend his book to readers who feel drawn—as all of us should—to a Christianity that is both evangelical and catholic.



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Original Sin Redeemed

THE JOY OF BEING WRONG: ORIGINAL SIN THROUGH EASTER EYES. By JAMES ALISON. *Crossroad. 323 pp. $24.95.*

***Reviewed by* James G. Williams**

THE "JOY OF BEING WRONG" is the Christian experience of being freed from the bondage to sin and enabled to recognize and confess that one's way of being in the world is wrong. James Alison has written a ground-breaking book that understands original sin from the vantage point of redemption. He proposes a "theological anthropology": an understanding of the human self and human culture that is supported and explicated in theological terms drawn primarily (though not exclusively) from the Roman Catholic tradition. Using René Girard's mimetic model of the origin and structure of human behavior, the author reinterprets ancient Christian doctrines and lays out a new basis for the relation of faith and reason. The object of this reinterpretation of ancient doctrine, particularly original sin, is to rehabilitate and defend Christian orthodoxy.

JAMES G. WILLIAMS *is Professor Emeritus of Religion at Syracuse University. He is the author of* The Bible, Violence, and the Sacred *and editor of* The Girard Reader.

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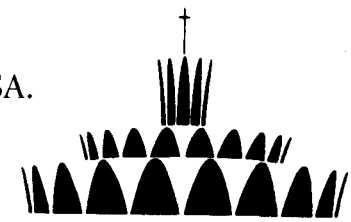

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Before turning to Christian orthodoxy, a summary of Girard's mimetic anthropology is in order. Girard's mimetic model has two basic elements: 1) the concept of mimetic desire and 2) the observation that sacrifice and scapegoating are universal human phenomena rooted in the way our "pre-human" ancestors sought to control the consequences of mimetic desire. Society and culture are rooted in a nonconscious, precognitive process that begins with one man imitating another—a model—in order to gain something the model leads him to desire. Insight into the formation of acquisitive desire according to the model (and potential rival) is found in many cultural texts and traditions. Jewish and Christian biblical narratives are distinctive in that the consequences of mimetic desire—rivalry, conflict, and collective violence—are so explicitly recognized and emphasized.

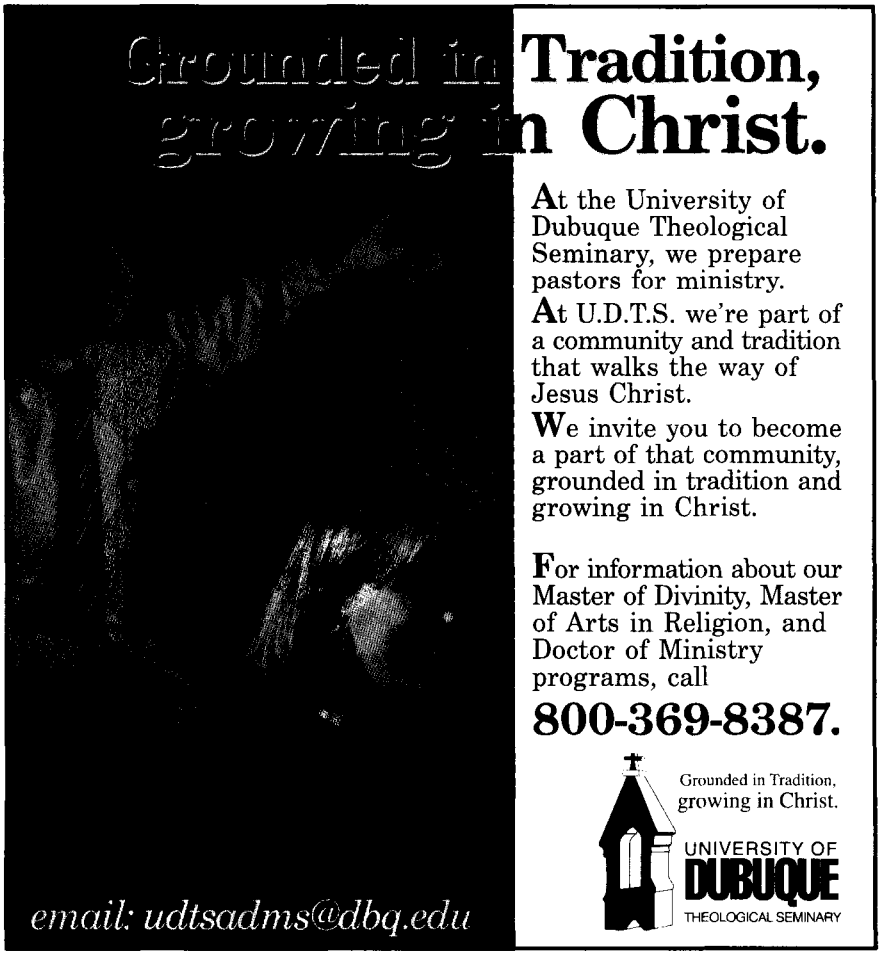
Rivalry and conflict over the objects of desire are inevitable given human freedom and the instability of desire. Mimetic rivalry and conflict result in collective violence, which typically takes the form of a mob converging upon a victim. The story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis offers a good example of collective violence against someone who is vulnerable. Through the scapegoating of Joseph the internal dissensions in the Jacob clan are remedied, at least temporarily. (Joseph's suffering and his forgiveness of his brothers can be viewed from a Christian standpoint as prefiguring Christ in the Gospels.)

After the execution or exclusion of the victim, societies develop interdictions and rituals whose purpose is to prevent mimetic desire from ever getting out of hand again. The victim is blamed for crimes which are never to be repeated (the interdiction), while the community reenacts as a sacrifice the dissolution supposedly wrought by the victim and the overcoming of the chaos that led to the establishment of the community or tradition (the ritual).

Girard proposes that ritual sacrifice and ritual scapegoating have essentially the same structure: the representation of originary violence, followed by selection of a victim, his execution or expulsion, and the subsequent affirmation of peace and stability. This archaic structure is still to be detected in what we now call "scapegoating" in common parlance, even though the obvious ritual features may be missing. Scriptural references to sacrifice and sacrificial law follow this archaic pattern, although many passages in the Jewish Scriptures (particularly in the great prophets) already expose and judge the connection of violence and sacrifice. The archaic pattern of sacred violence is completely disclosed in Christ's teachings and crucifixion and overcome in his resurrection, as related in the witness of the New Testament Gospels.

ALISON WORKS in two directions with Girard's mimetic model. On the one hand, he demonstrates that through the exercise of human reason and critical use of the model, a new and exciting perspective on the human condition and human potential is gained. On the other hand, his theological concern—on which I will focus—is to shed new light on the ancient Christian doctrine of original sin.

As already suggested, the title of the book catches nicely the object of the argument, which is that our nature may be changed—we are not simply duped by external forces or imprisoned within ourselves. Real conversion is possible. Alison argues that original sin is fully and radically known only through redemption and resurrection; its true meaning and scope is seen and acknowledged only "through Easter eyes." Surveying Old and New Testament texts, creeds (especially that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of the Council of Trent), papal teachings, and the thought of Augustine and Aquinas, Alison proposes a theological anthropology that is both original and faithful to Church teaching.

Alison's interpretation of the work and significance of the Council of Trent is an example of his rehabilitation and defense of orthodoxy. His reading of the canons of Trent offers an exciting orthodox alternative in contemporary Catholic theology. He moves between the extremes of a "liberal" position, associated for example with the name of Karl Rahner, which holds that nature, including human nature, is "already graced" and the world is a sacrament of redemption, and a "neoorthodox" position, associated for instance with Hans Urs von Balthasar, which holds that Christian redemption should be understood dramatically as a unique breaking-in of God's justice and salvation. Alison's reading mediates between these positions and appropriates the valid insights of both.

The canons of Trent may be summarized as follows. Anyone is anathema who 1) does not acknowledge Adam's sin, by which he lost the holiness and justice of his creation; 2) contradicts the effect of Adam's sin, which bequeaths not only pain and death to the human race, but also the death of the soul; 3) denies that sin is passed on from Adam to all by propagation, not by imitation, and that sin is removed by Christ through baptism; 4) denies that babies and small children must be baptized for the remission of sins; 5) denies that sin is remitted through the grace of Christ that is given in baptism.

ALISON'S APPROACH to the canons of Trent is informed by Girard's mimetic anthropology. If one accepts that we humans are desiring creatures whose humanity is based on being constituted by the other, the question becomes: Which other and what sort of relationship is it? Is it the Father of Jesus Christ who reconstitutes us with peaceful and loving desire? Or is it the other of distorted desire which continues to enmesh us in pride, rivalry, and scapegoating?

Alison's reading of the meaning and significance of Trent may be illustrated by looking at two of the anathemas, one for which it might appear that mimetic anthropology is irrelevant, the other which appears to contradict mimetic anthropology. To take the latter first, in the third canon we read that the sin of Adam is "passed on to all by propagation and not by imitation." But Girard teaches that we live and learn by imitative desire, apparently the anathematized position. Alison points out, however, that this phrase in the canon has its origin in Augustine's argument against Pelagius, who conceived of a morally neutral moment in a person's life when that person could sin or not sin. Trent only attempted to exclude any such morally neutral moment; it did not intend to canonize biological procreation, but, as Alison puts it, to claim that "there is no such thing as a purely 'natural' human being." We are not first biological, then cultural, beings, but from conception itself we are "always a completely cultural reality." This is in keeping with Girard's theory, which holds that "all humans living within a culture brought into being by a rivalistic mimesis are . . . structured from within by that rivalistic mimesis." The only deliverance from rivalistic mimesis is a new pacific mimesis. In this respect the Girardian theological anthropology is close to the neoorthodox pole of the oppositions mentioned above.

A Girardian reading also provides a new basis and clarification of canon 5, in which the Council turns to distinguish itself from the Lutheran version of the Christian story. It asserts against Pelagianism that real salvation, through Christ and Christian baptism, is neces-

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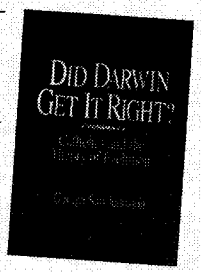

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sary; against the Lutheran position that the soul cannot be made worthy of heaven except by ascribing a counterfactual worthiness through Christ, it affirms that the essence of sin is removed in baptism. It also "confesses and perceives that in the baptized, concupiscence or a tendency to sin remains; since this is left for the struggle [*ad agonem*], it cannot harm those who do not give consent but, by the grace of Christ, offer strong resistance."

Alison comments that this canon intends to say that salvation results in a completely transformed life and that it is normal to experience resistance to this transformation because our human faculties have been formed by the distorted desire of original sin. What Trent did, in other words, is to deny that "*concupiscientia* is sin in the true sense of the word." "Our having been constituted in and [governed] by the other of distorted desire is such that it will take a long time and much effort for the effects of that alterity to be undone by our being constituted and [governed] by the other of pacific desire."

THIS POINT IS completely compatible with Girard's concept of desire as having a double valency. It is not synonymous with sin except when it is deviated, distorted, and deflected from the divine love as revealed in Christ. As Alison says, "Girard has provided [not an individual but] an interdividual psychology which shows that 'being-constituted-by-another' is simply part of being human, the key question being what sort of relationship to which other." Here we find a point in contact with the liberal pole of the aforementioned oppositions, at least to the extent that desire itself is viewed as the gift of the Creator to the human creature.

I recommend Alison's book highly as a way of doing theology that is simultaneously orthodox and creative.

Losing Our Moral Theology

LOSING OUR VIRTUE: WHY THE CHURCH MUST RECOVER ITS MORAL VISION. By DAVID F. WELLS. *Eerdmans. 228 pp. $25.*

***Reviewed by* J. Daryl Charles**

IT IS ALMOST sixty years since Hans Urs von Balthasar, in a penetrating essay titled *"Patristik, Scholastik, und Wir,"* observed what he considered to be the "late autumn" of our times. Just as "a tree in autumn drops its leaves without pain or regret," so too, noted von Balthasar, the tree of culture is now being stripped of its leaves:

> We are living in a time when the images of gods and idols are crashing all about us. The spiritual and cultural traditions of vast regions of the West are increasingly being called into question; indeed, we can go even further and say they are being liquidated, quickly and relatively painlessly.

An important addition to this genre of autumnal lament is *Losing Our Virtue*, written by David Wells, professor of historical and systematic theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Wells describes the book as the continuation of an enterprise begun in 1989, which aimed to "explore the reasons for the decay of evangelical thinking, and not least in theology." *Losing* represents the third in a series of works dedicated to exploring this decay. The 1993 volume, *No Place for Truth*—with the subtitle: *or, Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?*—sought "to show how the assumptions of modernity had intruded on the evangelical Church." A year later Wells published the second volume, *God in the Wasteland*, which continued to sketch the contours of modernity and its implications for doing theology. *Losing Our Virtue* extends Wells' critique of contemporary culture, with reflections on the meaning of cultural disorientation for evangelical faith. Not the least of the concerns raised by Wells' critique is the conspicuous absence of moral fiber in the Church—notably in the

J. DARYL CHARLES *teaches religion, philosophy, and ethics at Taylor University and is author of* Virtue Amidst Vice.

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evangelical community.

Wells begins by positing two kinds of spirituality present within evangelicalism, distinguished in his view not so much by different doctrinal starting-points as differing priorities assigned to moral reasoning. Wells wishes to contrast "Reformation or classical spirituality" with what he calls a "postmodern spirituality." The latter is understood to have open and accessible interactions with the institutions and impulses of contemporary culture. Borrowing from the work of sociologist Donald Miller, Wells sees "postmodern spirituality" at work in emerging, extra-denominational "new paradigm churches" characterized by three modes of thinking—the therapeutic, the individualistic, and the anti-establishmentarian. As conduits for "postmodern spirituality," argues Wells, these churches "appear to be succeeding, not because they are offering an alternative to our modern culture, rather because they are speaking with its voice, mimicking its moves."

By "classical spirituality," Wells is referring to the devotional habits and moral demeanor of the Protestant Reformers which had been "passed on in deepened pastoral form by the Puritans" and now have extended "down through history and into the present through people like Martyn Lloyd-Jones, J. I. Packer, John Stott, Francis Schaeffer, and Carl Henry." This stream is thought by Wells to be less susceptible to "dalliances with culture" than its contemporary cousin: "The simplest way to state this difference is to say that in classical spirituality what is moral is central, and in postmodern spirituality it is not."

FOUR OF THE SIX chapters in *Losing Our Virtue* constitute the heart of the book and are devoted to themes liberally treated in Wells' first two volumes—materialistic consumption, image and style over substance, the therapeutic culture, the lack of civic virtue, and, not least, society's aversion to truth, truth-telling, guilt, and moral accountability. Unlike most evangelical theologians, Wells is at home interacting with social criticism ranging from Philip Rieff, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Christopher Lasch to Irving Kristol, Gertrude Himmelfarb, and James Q. Wilson. For Wells, the pervasive moral stupor characteristic of late-twentieth-century North American culture, to which much social criticism in recent years has been directed, demands a response from the Church before any thoroughgoing moral reconstruction of civil society can take place.

It is refreshing when theologians —particularly evangelical theologians—take seriously the task of understanding culture, penetrate the assumptions that imbue the contemporary Zeitgeist, and offer a sustained critique of those assumptions. As in his earlier volumes, Wells shows himself to be conversant with various streams of social criticism as he wrestles with the present and future of evangelical faith.

Yet although Wells' social commentary and his critique of evangelicalism are engaging, even invigorating, one has the sense his analysis is incomplete. In light of the volume's subtitle, it is unclear to the reader what in fact the Church's "moral vision" is to be. In the final chapter Wells contends that the evangelical church must 1) courageously identify sin for what it is, and 2) "become more authentic morally." What precisely constitutes "moral authenticity" is left undefined and vague.

More significant, in this reviewer's opinion, are questions regarding moral formation that remain unaddressed in the volume. Precisely how does the Christian community inculcate virtue and moral vision among its own? Of what does the moral life consist? How is it cultivated? What are the basic building-blocks of moral formation? And to whom do we "postmoderns" look in the history of the Church for guidance in moral matters? The book's relative inattention to the rich history of Christian moral teaching from the Church's very inception is less a reflection of the author as a theologian and writer than it is a telling indication of a fundamental weakness inherent in the evangelical Protestant tradition as a whole. One important clue emerges in Wells' governing paradigm: for him the task of

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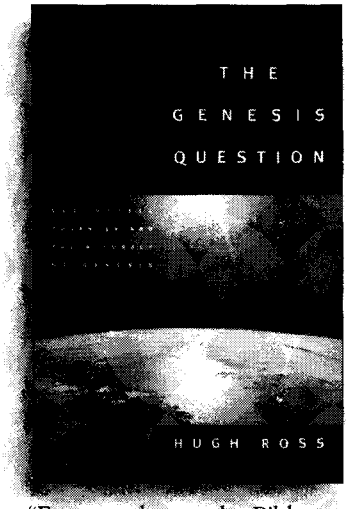

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THE MORAL QUESTION as Wells sees it is: "What is going to happen when Reformation faith flows into this modern channel churning with change and experimentation?" That which makes "Reformation faith" paradigmatic for Wells, and hence the necessary starting-point for reconstituting the (evangelical) Church's moral vision, is his conviction that prior to Luther "the Word of God had been taken captive by the Catholic Church, the meaning of sin had been lost, and the death of Christ had been diluted." "And yet," Wells notes, "the Reformation still happened. The gospel was recovered, the Church was renewed, Christian life was invigorated, and Europe was changed in deep and profound ways." Wells' conclusion is inevitable: "If the Church then, which had been all but lost despite its outward wealth and pomp, could be recovered, so can the Church today."

Notwithstanding this reviewer's Protestant evangelical confessional commitments, there are difficulties with the attempt to ground the thesis of moral decay and reconstruction in lessons from the sixteenth century. To suggest that evangelical Protestantism points the way to "classical spirituality" is to blithely disregard fifteen centuries of authentic "classical Christian spirituality" and obscure the desperately needed benefits of this rich tradition from evangelical view. One wishes for a more substantial treatment of the classical philosophical understanding of virtue and the moral life, to which the book devotes only two paragraphs, one of which contains the following summary:

> The importance of the classical view of the virtues was that conduct was seen to be the outcome of character, and it was considered entirely futile to divorce inward moral reality from its exercise in the society or community in which a person lived. In time, this discussion about the cardinal virtues passed into Catholicism, where it was incorporated into a structure of thought in which these virtues were seen to be the basis for, and as becoming finally realized in, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Luther, of course, was quite impatient with this line of thought, because Aristotle, he said, had introduced into the Church a theory of natural virtue that took insufficient account of sin. It allowed its followers to find in their moral accomplishments and character formation a basis for laying claim to God's salvation. On the Protestant side, therefore, matters of moral principle were discussed differently.

Wells sees the Reformation divide as the necessary starting-point for moral theology, given the Reformers' commitment to *sola scriptura*. It is not with the priority of Scripture that this reviewer takes issue, but rather with evangelicals' understanding and application of the *sola scriptura* slogan. Scripture is authoritative in every age and cultural context. Yet, in every age and cultural context Scripture must be interpreted, consensually, by the Christian community. Thus, Scripture never exists *sola*; rather, it is understood and interpreted via the collective wisdom of the Christian church in all ages and communions. For this reason, it is more appropriate to speak of *prima scriptura*—which more adequately represents historic Christian orthodoxy while preserving Scripture's normative place in doing moral theology.

Without denying the place that Protestant reformers occupy in evangelical faith, it should be said that classic Christian teaching, whether in the realm of doctrine or ethics, is best defined not against the backdrop of the sixteenth centu-

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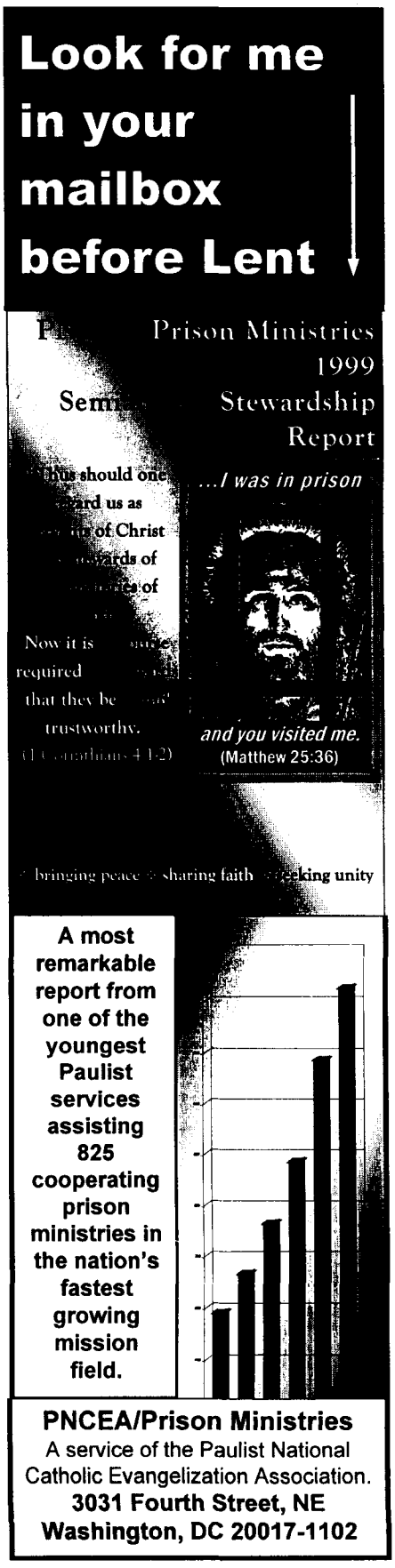
ry, but rather in the light of the broader apostolic tradition. This living tradition includes the early creeds, the ecumenical councils, and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Doctrinal as well as ethical reforms are thus best undergirded by historic Christian orthodoxy. Evangelical reform, as Protestant evangelical theologian Timothy George has wisely cautioned, does not come by removing —or ignoring—the landmarks that serve all Christians of all subsequent times and places. The recovery of moral vision, a vision correctly perceived by Wells to be lacking in the evangelical church, requires a vision of the Church and of moral theology that under the *consensus fidelium* is not limited to the last 450 years. Evangelicals should not lose sight of the fact that Luther and Calvin themselves were molded by and indebted to patristic exegesis. It was, above all else, to the purity of the apostolic tradition that Luther wished to return.

MY OWN EXPERIENCE teaching students from evangelical traditions offers graphic and sober confirmation of the imperative to draw from the wider consensus of historic orthodoxy, especially in the domain of moral theology. Because of the tendency in Luther and the reformers to distinguish between grace and law—understandable relative to late-medieval scholasticism—Protestants ever since have erected a false dichotomy between grace and law that has had debilitating effects in theology, ethics, and public policy. Luther's mistrust of the message of James—i.e., that faith without validating works is dead (James 2) —has been inherited by and continues to hamstring Luther's spiritual offspring, who wrongly juxtapose grace and law, mercy and justice, love and holiness, indeed, the ethical standards of the Old and New Testaments. The Protestant evangelical primacy of justification by faith, coupled with an overemphasis on discontinuity between the covenants, has more often than not resulted in the confusion of soteriological and ethical categories, in the end breeding among evangelicals a moral mindset devoid of both foundations and fiber.

Protestant evangelical failure to appreciate the Church's entire history, moreover, has resulted in the neglect of patristic and medieval writings laden with rich deposits for doing moral theology. In ignoring Augustine's reflections on virtue in *On Free Choice of the Will*, the contemporary church misses an indispensable resource for reconstituting moral vision. Who better than Augustine, the moral reprobate turned theologian, to point the way through the "postmodern" morass of twisted values and pagan assumptions about life?

Or consider the Church's loss without Thomas Aquinas' magisterial treatment of human acts and habits, virtue and vice, desire and chastity, law and grace, comprising the entire second part of his *Summa Theologiae*. For Thomas, the towering master of all the doctors of the Church, falling into vice is as easy as falling from a ladder, whereas the acquisition of virtue is a slow and unspectacular process. "The life of sin," he writes, "is a fall from coherence to chaos"; by contrast, "the life of virtue [is] a climb from the many to the One." Thomistic reflections on vice, virtue, and the moral life are without parallel; tragically, the insights of the good doctor rarely make their way into evangelical thought and life. Frequently overlooked by most Protestants is the fact that the great scholastics were motivated to clarify the meaning of *fides quaerens intellectum*.

It is scarcely any wonder then that late-twentieth-century evangelical Protestants are rarely found among ethicists, moral philosophers, or policy analysts. By contrast, it is Roman Catholics, whose outlook is molded by a tradition that values philosophical and theological reflection, to whom we are primarily indebted for contributions in moral theology. (One searches in vain, for example, for a Protestant equivalent of Vatican II's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call for the renewal of moral theology, repeated more recently in the Catholic Catechism.) And while part of the evangelical dilemma can be ascribed to the "scandal" of our noninvolvement in intellectual culture, as one historian has argued, this is only part of the story. Not until evangelical Protestants are able—or perhaps willing—to acknowledge their tendency toward ecclesiastical myopia and look past the sixteenth century will we see a renaissance in evangelical thinking.

Being, My Way

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. By RÜDIGER SAFRANSKI. Translated by Ewald Osers. *Harvard University Press. 474 pp. $24.50.*

Reviewed by **Robert Sokolowski**

MARTIN HEIDEGGER was taken by a single issue in his philosophical thinking, the question of Being. Everything he wrote, even his commentaries on other writers, got pulled explicitly into that one overriding question. In his early work, as expressed in *Being and Time,* he concentrates on man as the place (*Dasein*) where the question of Being is raised, and in his later work he focuses more directly on Being itself. Heidegger had an extremely powerful grasp of this issue. His formulation of it, in his teaching and writing, made an immense impact on many of the most important twentieth-century European thinkers as well as on the general public. As one student later described a Heidegger lecture: "It was as if a gigantic lightning bolt cut through a sky clothed in darkness. . . . In almost painful brightness the things of the world lay revealed. . . . It was not a matter of a system, but of existence. . . . It had me speechless when I left the [room]. I felt as though for a moment I had gazed at the foundations of the world."

The force with which this issue gripped him made it hard for Heidegger to distinguish it from other issues. He was formulating his approach to the question of Being at the time when he overtly abandoned his Catholic faith (in 1919, at the age of thirty), and he failed to distinguish between the religious and the philosophical issue of Being. (There is a difference between the two.) Furthermore, he elaborated his thinking at a time of great turmoil in Germany (in the 1920s and early 1930s), and failed to distinguish the political from the philosophical issue of Being. He conflated his philosophy with religion and politics and saw himself not only as a philosopher but also as a prophet and leader, precisely in his character as a philosopher—he felt it a philosopher's duty to act as a participant in history. This mixture, although typical of modernity, is highly unstable. As is commonly known, he joined the Nazi party and served for almost a year as rector of the University of Freiburg (1933-34), expressing public support for the leadership and policies of Hitler and implementing them in the university. In contrast with most modern philosophers, whose curricula vitae are almost entirely academic, Heidegger's life entered into the public record and therefore calls for both narrative and reflection.

MUCH HAS BEEN written in recent years about his life and its relation to his philosophy. Rüdiger Safranski's book, which appeared in German in 1994, draws on this work, examines the relevant correspondence and further documentation, and weaves Heidegger's actions and thought into an excellent moral and intellectual biography. He proceeds chronologically, recounting Heidegger's background, family, education, and relationship with the Church, including his studies as a seminarian and the very short time he spent as a Jesuit novice. He traces Heidegger's affiliation with Edmund Husserl, his marginal involvement in World War I, the dramatic impact of his early teaching in Freiburg and Marburg, and his return to Freiburg in 1928 as Husserl's successor. He describes his friendships, both intellectual and personal, in particular his romantic involvement with Hannah Arendt in Marburg in 1924-25 and their complicated relationship later on. Heidegger's enthusiastic support of the Nazis is detailed, as is the distance he took from the party in the late 1930s. There follow the war years, the investigation by the denazification committees after the war, the ban on his teaching, his reinstatement (after the verdict in 1949, "Fellow traveler. No punitive

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measures."), his personal and philosophical relationships in the 1960s and early 1970s, and his death in 1976.

At each of these stages Safranski presents Heidegger's thought as it was then developed, and he also surveys other ideas and authors that made up the wider cultural context. He is a very capable commentator on Heidegger's philosophy, giving, for example, an excellent treatment of the concept of intentionality and a fine description of the manner in which logical propositions or thoughts differ from merely psychological experiences. The one area in which Safranski's philosophy fails him is in bottom-line metaphysics, where he exhibits a fondness for change and historicity and an obvious dislike of identity and substance.

The narrative part of the book is captivating. Safranski develops, for example, the viewpoints expressed in the correspondence among Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Arendt. The characters of the people involved in Heidegger's life are insightfully presented, including the important role of his wife Elfride. The book is written *sine ira et studio*: both the good and the bad aspects of its subject are fairly described, respecting Heidegger's notorious complexity. The book contains a wealth of information clearly presented, and it should remain for a long time the platform for further inquiry into Heidegger's life. There are occasional lapses—such as the mixup of dates on the last page, the misnaming of Arendt's concept of "labor" as "work," and the confusion of compline with the Mass—but it would be pedantic to dwell on them.

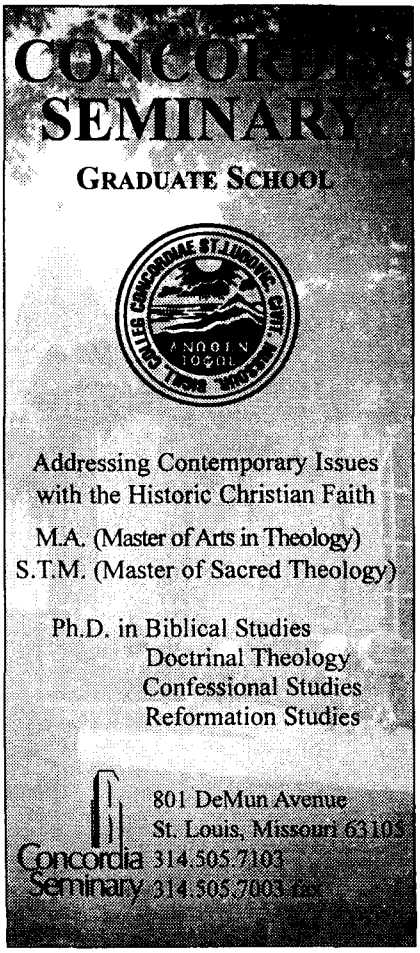
HEIDEGGER ADDRESSES the question of Being and also describes the form this question has taken in the Cartesian, technological age we have been living in, an age that regards scientific method as the highest type of truth. He strongly criticizes this technological project, and not just for the specific ways in which it damages social structures and cultural concerns. Technology for Heidegger is not one human enterprise among many, but a comprehensive understanding of ourselves and of Being. It is the form in which Being is disclosed in our time. When we live in technology, everything—the family, neighborhoods, art, religious ritual, communication, education, public life, even biological and intellectual life—becomes packaged and mobilized. The last words Heidegger wrote, in a note to a friend cited by Safranski, ask "whether and how, in the age of a uniform technological world civilization, there can still be such a thing as home."

As much as he raised questions about modernity, however, he was captured by some of its principles. Like Francis Bacon, Hobbes, and Descartes, Heidegger denies or at least neglects the natures or forms of things. He thinks about Being, and about man in relation to Being, but he does not think about the differentiated natures that have their own ends. He does not think about the teleologies of things, the measures that are given by the way things are when they are at their best. Heidegger calls man "Dasein," literally "Being there," calling attention to his relations and his relatedness to things, the world, and Being. But his analysis of man-as-related reduces man to his relations, from the nominative to the dative, saying nothing of human substance or nature.

Because he neglects the form and nature of things, including human things, Heidegger does not have an ethics or a political philosophy, since these are attempts to reflect on the *best* human life and the *best* way of seeking it in community. Instead, he describes the highly formal and singular *Dasein* that finds itself thrown out of nowhere into the thick of things.

Since for Heidegger Being is relational, when *Dasein* relates to the world, there can be only two outcomes—*Dasein* controls its relation to or encounter with the world, or the world controls *Dasein*. This *Dasein* is called upon (by itself) to be resolute, to initiate projects and activate its purposes, to be a dative for the display of Being, but not to be measured by its own teleology and the ends prescribed by the relationships and actions it enters into. As Safranski puts it, "Everything that obliges one is transformed into something that one has chosen oneself." In the words of that other great existentialist, the authentic *Dasein* can say, toward the end of life, "I did it my way." This self-understanding is hard to distinguish from that which supports the technological world.

HEIDEGGER HAS a philosophy for the self without a philosophy of the soul; he looks to the person but not the nature. But the person without a nature is unspecified. This predicament, not knowing what I am, may require courage, but the softer virtue of temperance or moderation does not have any place. In



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this regard, as well as in his emphasis on the singular and the exceptional, Heidegger is Machiavellian and very modern. In his thought the possible overrides the actual, and freedom establishes truth instead of being governed by it. He was also modern, at least in his earlier thought, in thinking that philosophy should become engaged as one of the players in the active life instead of pursuing truth for its own sake and simply on its own terms.

It is interesting that the first virtue that Aristotle discusses in book three of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is courage, the ability to face painful and frightening things. In its highest form courage enables us to risk death on behalf of our community, our city. Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, also speaks about facing death, but he describes a solitary and dreadful confrontation that jolts us into the question of Being; it raises the question of the whole only to show that the whole is fractured, that we are finite, throwing us back on ourselves. Where Aristotle speaks about the courage of the citizen, of man as the political animal, Heidegger speaks of the courage to accept our finitude, to take our life in hand, and to philosophize.

Despite these difficulties, Heidegger brings out important dimensions of the question of Being. He talks not only about Being, but also about the question itself and ourselves as the questioners. He shows that no matter what we are occupied with, we are always an issue for ourselves. He thus offers a positive development of the modern turn to the subject, placing the subject in a more appropriate setting than does the epistemological philosophy of Descartes. Heidegger also brings out the inevitable role of hiddenness and absence in the disclosure of Being, a theme he doubtless absorbed from Husserl. Furthermore, he decries the routinized use of language that common discourse falls into, claiming that all nonphilosophical language is fallen discourse, mere chatter. In doing so, however, he misses the distinction between thoughtless language and true opinion; once again, the intermediate stage, in this case true opinion, the proper place of political activity, is not sufficiently acknowledged. The omission overlooks the space for politics and belief, and distorts philosophy itself.

ONE OF HEIDEGGER'S great contributions was to read philosophical texts as a philosopher and not as an academic. As Leo Strauss said of him, "I had never seen before such seriousness, profundity, and concentration in the interpretation of philosophic texts." He was the equal of the most important texts in Western philosophy, but always made them address the question he was raising. He stimulated a rich revival of classical scholarship in Germany and France.

Heidegger's work, both his teaching and writing, derives its power not only from its depth of insight but also from its concreteness. That is what gives it its rhetorical force. He does not simply speak about the features of Being or the power of the spirit, but about you yourself here and now using a tool, or discovering emotional resistance to what you wish to do, or being bewildered by a predicament; Safranski quotes Sartre as saying that in this approach we can "philosophize about everything, about this cup, this spoon that I am stirring with, the chair, the waiter taking my order." Such ordinary situations are plugged into metaphysical truth, which registers immediately and tangibly. Heidegger uses rhetorical and poetic tropes to bring this about—word-plays, reversals, condensation, etymological allusion—and hence his writings lose much of their strength in translation. No matter how good the translator, the work often becomes watery and stilted. *Gestell*, for example, goes limp as "frame" or "enframing." The verbal overtones of the original language are essential if one is to capture the full force of what is being said. Heidegger's work, more than that, say, of Kant or Husserl, needs not so much to be translated as rewritten in the target language.

Over time new perspectives on Heidegger's thought emerge, allowing us to determine more precisely its originality, its dependence, its validity, and its weaknesses. Is Husserl, for example, a peak towering behind him or only a foothill? How can Christianity define itself against his quasi-pagan religiousness? (For Heidegger, "The Good is only the Good of the Evil," but it is central to Christian faith that God does not need evil to be God.) Heidegger's work will not go away; it is high-voltage thinking and it expresses things that had not been stated before. In political matters, he may have been the philosopher of the village and not the city, but his very mistakes shed light on the modern project.

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As the technology of the West, now reinforced by electronics, threatens to eradicate religion, custom, and locality, Heidegger's thoughts on the issue of Being and the ways it can be forgotten deserve our reflection. This book is a helpful and informative introduction to that end.

The Liberal Neoplatonist?

EXISTENTIALISTS AND MYSTICS: WRITINGS ON PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE. By IRIS MURDOCH. *Allen Lane/Penguin. 546 pp. $37.95.*

Reviewed by **Alan Jacobs**

IT IS TIME to begin assessing Iris Murdoch's remarkable and difficult-to-categorize career—and not, or not strictly, because she will soon enter her ninth decade. After all, Murdoch's finest novels and her most important philosophical book appeared when she was in her late sixties and early seventies, a phenomenon perhaps unprecedented among significant literary or philosophical figures. Until her most recent novel, *Jackson's Dilemma* (1996), there had been no signs of diminishment in her remarkable powers, but that book was an unexpected disaster, and in early 1997 a terrible explanation appeared: Murdoch's husband, the literary critic John Bayley, announced that she had contracted Alzheimer's disease and was gradually but inexorably losing her mental bearings. (His touching account of their life together and its recent changes appeared in the July 20, 1998 issue of the *New Yorker*.) Thus, though Murdoch's life goes on, her career as an artist and a philosopher is surely over.

It is as a novelist that Murdoch is best known, which is not surprising, since novels are more widely read than books of philosophy. But it is also important that, while she wrote twenty-five novels, this collection—along with *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992) and her first book, *Sartre, Romantic Rationalist* (1953)—constitutes virtually the whole of her philosophical output. Of her earlier philosophical books, all but the two just mentioned were collections of essays, and all of those essays have been reprinted here as the independent entities they once were. *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* will stand as Murdoch's best work of philosophy, but *Existentialists and Mystics* is the book to consult if one wishes to survey the whole scope of her philosophical work.

TWO THEMES stand out for the reader of this collection. The first is, in the title of one of Murdoch's essays, "The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts." What this means can be discovered in a single sentence near the end of *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*: "Good represents the reality of which God is the dream." Or: "We can lose God, but not Good." Murdoch is a Platonist, to a degree and with a purity almost unknown in modern thought: it is the Good (always in absolutizing capitals) that she considers it the task of philosophy to explore. All else, including God, is an image of this utter Good, and may be useful to us as we move towards that perfection; but because our human tendency is to substitute the image for the reality, even the worship of God may distract us from our proper pursuit.

Murdoch repeatedly insists that morality cannot justify itself. She rejects the tradition which believes that morality as such can be the ground of a good life; to the contrary, she argues, morality must be grounded in religious commitment. Religion, as Murdoch defines it, demands more of us than any mere morality can; it requires our unswerving allegiance, its claims upon us are absolute. In this sense, while the desire to be good or to be a better person may be a merely moral project, the pursuit of the Good is genuinely religious. The true encounter with Christ (or the Buddha, or whoever) will be a mystical vision of the Good that shines through him, not a simple acknowledgment of his ethical superiority and the value of following his example.

The religion Murdoch envisions —as many characters in her fiction come to believe, as her Socrates preaches in the witty and provoca-

ALAN JACOBS *teaches in the Department of English at Wheaton College.*

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tive dialogues reprinted here, and as Murdoch herself repeatedly argues—will ultimately become a religion without gods. Not only *can* we lose God, but if we are to retain Good, at some point we *must* lose God. For a humanity "come of age," in Bonhoeffer's phrase, the Good is what persists, what nourishes and sustains us.

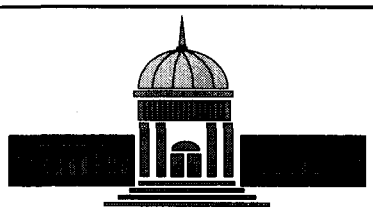
BUT WHAT exactly *is* the Good? There's the rub. At times Murdoch neatly escapes this recurrent problem of Platonism by saying that the Good is not revered because it exists, but exists insofar as it is revered. It may be indispensable—unlike God—but this indispensability is heuristic. We cannot live in the way we most want to live, or at least the way some of us want to live, without it. In an early (1957) essay called "Metaphysics and Ethics"—a kind of dry run for *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, its likeness to which indicates how little Murdoch's key ideas altered over the years—she claims that "Man is a creature who makes pictures of himself, and then comes to resemble the picture." If we are to take this claim seriously—and it is more fully developed in *Metaphysics*—then Murdoch's almost repetitive earnestness about the "sovereignty of Good" and her consistent repudiation of relativism take on a very different coloration than they might have at first. For the claim suggests that we are the makers rather than the finders of meaning and value, the creators of a Good which we then live by. That this sentence appears as the epigraph to the whole collection we are considering may reveal more about the book's editor, Peter Conradi, than about Murdoch; but it's hard to be sure.

The second theme that dominates this collection is, appropriately enough, the relationship between philosophy and literature. It is a relationship much debated today, and for good reason. On this subject philosophers have historically been misled by their admiration of Plato's Socrates, and are only just beginning to reconsider their familiar categories and hierarchies. Socrates refers (in the *Republic*) to "the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry," thus providing a simple (in fact a simplistic) way of describing the two pursuits, and unfortunately philosophers have until quite recently simply accepted the Socratic characterization. They have rarely noticed that Plato undermines (or at least interrogates) the Socratic understanding of philosophy through the very literary means he employs to depict Socrates as a character—something noted recently by scholars as various as Seth Bernardete, Jacques Derrida, and Martha Nussbaum.

Philosophy and literature, though, cannot simply be conflated after the fashion of Richard Rorty. And by insisting that philosophy and literature were for the ancient Athenians merely two ways of pursuing the same goal (*eudaimonia*, meaning happiness, or, better, "human flourishing"), even Martha Nussbaum runs the risk of overlooking how enormously consequential these procedural differences can be. The answers we receive in this life are dependent not only on the questions we ask, but the form in which we ask them.

JUST THIS is one of Murdoch's key concerns. In several essays in this book, especially those from the late fifties and early sixties, Murdoch criticizes the dominant philosophical models of that era—English analytical philosophy, especially of the "ordinary language" sort, and French existentialism—for placing unnatural and unfortunate restrictions on the kinds of questions we can philosophically ask, the kinds of issues with which philosophy can occupy itself. One thinks of the famous last sentence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* ("What we cannot speak of we must pass over in silence") and of the way Anglo-American philosophers used it to sweep many classic philosophical questions from the table as matters about which philosophy can say nothing. And of course existentialism and its successors enforce, or try to enforce, similar constrictions, as in Derrida's critique of Western metaphysics, the whole "onto-theological tradition" from Plato onwards. (In Murdoch's later work her censure of existentialism would be replaced by a censure of post-structuralism, and when she was overcome by Alzheimer's she was working on a book about Heidegger, who coined the term "onto-theological tradition"—though he got the idea from Nietzsche.)

For Murdoch, what these very different ways of thinking have in common is that they suffer, and cause us to suffer, from a "poverty of concepts." Their range of terms and questions is simply inadequate to the complexity and diversity of human experience. (The philosopher Bernard Williams has also voiced precisely this complaint.) In what may be her most famous essay,



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"Against Dryness" (1961), Murdoch writes,

> We have suffered a general loss of concepts, the loss of a moral and political vocabulary. We no longer use a spread-out substantial picture of the manifold virtues of man and society. . . . [W]hat we require is a renewed sense of the difficulty and complexity of the moral life and the opacity of persons. We need more concepts in terms of which to picture the substance of our being; it is through an enriching and deepening of concepts that moral progress takes place.

If such an "enriching and deepening of concepts" is what we need, how do we get it? Murdoch suggests that literature, and more particularly the novel, can help to supplement and nourish philosophy's meager conceptual universe.

But not just any novels will do. In another essay Murdoch identifies two dominant types of modern novel:

> The modern novel, the serious novel, does tend toward either of two extremes: either it is a tight metaphysical object, which wishes it were a poem, and which attempts to convey, often in mythical form, some central truth about the human condition—or else it is a loose journalistic epic, documentary or possibly even didactic in inspiration, offering a commentary on current institutions or on some matter out of history. We are offered things or truths. What we have lost is persons.

It is clear from that last-quoted sentence that neither of the current common types will meet our need for a richer account of the moral life. Murdoch is appealing for a recovery of the nineteenth-century novel. In subsequent pages of the essay just quoted she names Tolstoy, George Eliot, Sir Walter Scott; elsewhere Austen, Dickens, Dostoevsky. Each of these writers offers us persons inhabiting worlds: Murdoch is refreshingly unashamed to say that their characters are "like real people," and that novelists have a kind of obligation to create such characters, if they can.

It would seem that the expansiveness of these writers (Austen alone, perhaps, excepted) links them more closely with the "loose journalistic epics" than with the "tight metaphysical objects." Perhaps the writers of social epics err in the right direction? But Murdoch says forthrightly that "on the whole the small metaphysical novels are better than the social epics. . . . The tightly conceived thing-like books are on the whole better written, more imaginatively conceived, and altogether more inspired and ambitious than the others."

But how do we account for that success? A clue may be found when Murdoch names the books of this kind that she admires: Sartre's *Nausea*, Camus' *The Stranger*. Clearly, the "tight metaphysical objects" sustain their vision and their coherence by virtue of the existentialist philosophy that animates them. (The bigger books, by contrast, have only a vague and philosophically uninformed political agenda animating them: thus they "lack creative vitality.") So Murdoch's judgment of these well-wrought urns is twofold: they succeed, relatively speaking, because they are philosophically grounded, but the philosophy that grounds them is an inadequate one. The books are concise and structurally neat because the philosophy they exposit is as well—but such neatness is purchased at an unacceptable price, the forfeiture of the enormous territory of human experience that the nineteenth-century novel took to be its proper inheritance. As Murdoch says in *Metaphysics*, "The achievement of coherence is itself ambiguous. Coherence is not necessarily good, and one must question its cost. Better sometimes to remain confused."

AT THIS POINT a vital question arises: what was the philosophy that underlay and animated the great nineteenth-century novels that Murdoch so admires? If philosophers could identify that, and recover it, then perhaps our society could again have the kind of novels we need for our moral health. And indeed, Murdoch knows what that philosophy is, though unfortunately it isn't a full-fledged philosophy so much as a highly generalized political attitude: it is Liberalism, not in the contemporary sense but, as Murdoch says, in John Stuart Mill's sense. (She always capitalizes the word to remind us of this distinction.) Indeed, one of the tragedies of modern life, Murdoch suggests, is that Mill wasn't a better philosopher; today, she says, "we must be willing consciously to defend . . . a

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conception of the whole human being, the contingent eccentric fellow, the fellow whom John Stuart Mill lovingly envisaged but whom he was unable philosophically to protect, as having a right to exist."

How to achieve this recuperation of Mill's Liberalism? If we wish to do so, "it is necessary to detach Liberalism from Romanticism"—and by Romanticism Murdoch chiefly means Kant. I once heard one philosopher tell another that "Kant is something you can get over," but for Murdoch Kant is something we *have* to get over if we want to have a healthy Liberal regard for ordinary people and ordinary life. In Murdoch's logic, Kant is to Liberalism as God is to the Good. The problem is to imagine what Liberalism would look like if it were completely purged of Kantianism. Actually, I'm pretty sure I know the answer to that riddle: it would look like a novel by George Eliot, or (in a quirkier form) by Charles Dickens. *Middlemarch* and *Bleak House* simply *are* the philosophical discourse of Liberalism, which is constitutionally unamenable to dialectical defense. (This is still more true of modern forms of small-"l" liberalism, which is why John Rawls is a bad philosopher.)

Though everything in Murdoch's argument leads to this conclusion, I'm not sure she would accept it. While she might agree with Nussbaum's claim that philosophy and literature in their best forms pursue the same general goal, she insists that they are not and can never be the same thing (see, for example, the 1978 interview on this subject that opens *Existentialists and Mystics*). What Murdoch wants, I believe, is for Liberalism to have its philosophical demonstrations *and* its literary explorations, so that the two different genres of thinking and writing can test and illuminate each other. Perhaps that is why she wrote both novels and philosophical treatises. But I would point to the prevalence of the former in her oeuvre—twenty-five novels, many of them quite large, while the complete philosophical works fit neatly into three volumes—as evidence for my claim that the novel is Liberalism's true and proper genre.

The moderately attentive reader may be asking, indeed may have been asking for some paragraphs now, how this defense of Liberalism comports with Murdoch's avowed Platonism. That is a question I cannot answer. Indeed, when I came to this volume I was much more familiar with Murdoch the neo-Neoplatonist, and was rather taken aback by the emphasis on Liberalism in many of the essays collected here. It does not seem to me that these are compatible philo-

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sophical projects, Plato being anything but a Liberal, and such elements of his thought that are amenable to Liberalism being difficult to extract from their metaphysical context. All that Plato and John Stuart Mill have in common, it seems to me, is an extreme earnestness about the pursuit of what is good and right. I noted earlier that some of Murdoch's comments, especially in her later work, smack of pragmatism; and there is certainly a distinction to be made between really being earnest and believing that earnestness is socially and personally useful. (To paraphrase Sam Goldwyn, earnestness is the key to morals: once you learn to fake that, the rest is easy.) I hope that in her work Murdoch was as earnest as Plato and Mill, and as she usually appeared to be; if not, then there is a great vacuum at the heart of her thinking, one which neither the Good nor Liberalism nor any other capitalized abstraction could fill.

BRIEFLY NOTED

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH VATICAN II: THE CATHOLIC CRISIS EXPLAINED. By RALPH M. MCINERNY. *Sophia Institute Press. 168 pp. $14.95.*

Don't be misled by the rather alarming title: Ralph McInerny's new book is not another chronicle of the Council's supposed blunders, nor another recounting of the liturgical abuses and doctrinal distortions that have plagued the post-conciliar Church. Instead, the well-known Notre Dame professor and mystery novelist has produced a remarkably even-handed, sober, and engaging whodunit, explaining that the Council's teachings (with which, he takes pains to say, nothing whatsoever is wrong) were hijacked by theologians who mischaracterized, deliberately or otherwise, the "spirit of Vatican II." The "Catholic crisis" is a crisis not of arguments but of authority; the conflict in the Church is not between competing theologies but competing masters, with dissenting theologians on the one hand and the Bishop of Rome on the other. McInerny sees *Humanae Vitae*, the 1968 encyclical on contraception, as the flashpoint of the crisis. With meticulous research, he traces the various rejections of the encyclical and the growing confusion of the laity, torn between rival authorities. Dissenting theologians, he argues, initiated a crisis of conscience among the laity much more serious than that over the issue of contraception. In the years since 1968, dissenters have again and again ruled on the truth and falsity of Church teachings, setting themselves up as authorities against, rather than within, the magisterium. McInerny contends that the role of a theologian is an ecclesial one; many of the Church's current problems, he concludes, result from a distortion of that role. Indeed, the current crisis can be resolved only in obedience to the Church's wisdom. This is, in the end, a hopeful book that will give the Catholic faithful, as well as others who may be perplexed about the state of the Catholic Church, the confidence that all is not lost.

— Alicia Mosier

THE END OF THE MODERN WORLD. By ROMANO GUARDINI. *Intercollegiate Studies Institute. 202 pp. $24.95.*

A revised edition of Guardini's 1956 classic, with a foreword by Richard John Neuhaus and an introduction by Frederick Wilhelmsen. As Neuhaus and Wilhelmsen warn us, Guardini's vision of the present and the future is bracing stuff, going beyond optimism and pessimism into the prophetic wilderness where the difficult truth can be proclaimed. The truth, in his view, is that man has lost his place in the universe—and he has lost it because God no longer has a place there. Guardini sees a new age coming, however, in which the fight between Christianity and secularism will be sharpened and in which it will be possible, if we have the nerve for it, to restore man's dignity and his sense of place. The times will be dangerous, but Christians will find the battle a "clean and open" one in which the virtues—especially obedience, trust, courage, charity, humility, and asceticism—will be

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their best weapons. Guardini's book is more than a harsh look at our diseased condition, and quite the opposite of a lament for times past. It is an urgent call to holiness, an inspiring challenge, and an exceptionally important book for a new millennium.

— *AM*

ABORTION WARS: A HALF CENTURY OF STRUGGLE 1950-2000. Edited by RICKIE SOLINGER. *University of California Press. 413 pp. $16.95 paper.*

While this collection is mostly larded with high-fat, low-fiber essays, several contributions make it very much worth reading. Editor Rickie Solinger, a historian and author, admits in her introduction that despite the myth that prior to *Roe v. Wade* abortionists were "dirty and dangerous back-alley butchers," pro-choicers have long known that there actually were "astonishingly high rates of technical proficiency." In one essay, Marsha Saxton, a disability rights activist, makes a moving case against prenatal testing. While unwilling to buck the party line, Saxton does offer the against-the-grain admonition that "many who resist selective abortion insist that there is something deeply valuable and profoundly human . . . in meeting and loving a child or adult with a severe disability." From William Saletan, a contributor to *Mother Jones* magazine and the author of a forthcoming book on the politics of abortion, we learn how after the Supreme Court's 1986 *Thornburgh* decision, pro-choice strategists began to develop what he calls a "conservative message strategy" that appealed to politicians and voters "more conservative than the feminists and civil libertarians on whom the movement usually relied." The genius of NARAL's now-famous slogan "Who Decides—You or Them?" was that the "Them" could be spun to mean big government—"nosy, corrupt politicians and bureaucrats," while the "You" was to suggest "families and communities," muting the message of the "liberal, feminist strain of abortion rights." By narrowing their agenda, Saletan argues, pro-choice strategists prevailed in the years immediately after *Webster*. The rub was that the very same rhetoric of less government and more parental authority could be and was turned against them to pass measures such as parental notification. In fact, this rhetoric unintentionally sanctioned the new measures. Thus, Saletan maintains, the right to abortion survived, while "abortion restrictions have overrun the country." In all, worthwhile opposition research.

— *Dave Andrusko*

POWERFUL PRAYERS. By LARRY KING, with Rabbi IRWIN KATSOF. Forward by Dr. Robert H. Schuller. *Renaissance Books. 256 pp. $22.95.*

When Chaia King suggested to her dad, talk show host Larry, that he write a book about the prayer lives of important people, at first he balked—he had never prayed himself. But then he became curious. Determined to explore this alien custom and goaded by his mentor and co-author Rabbi Irwin Katsof, King did what he does best: interview celebrities. *Powerful Prayers* has King talking about prayer with people ranging from Jimmy Carter and Shimon Peres to the Dalai Lama, Chuck Colson, New Age guru Marianne Williamson, Senators John McCain and Tom Daschle, quarterback Steve Young, self-help pitchman Anthony Robbins, singers David Crosby and Kenny Rogers, Starbucks founder Howard Schultz, and *ER*'s Noah Wyle, among many others. The responses he gets are what you might expect—clergymen, politicians, and athletes tend to favor traditional kinds of prayer, while New Agers and Hollywood types opt for more exotic rituals. Some of the latter border on the bizarre, such as Oscar-winner Rod Steiger's habit of praying while floating naked in his pool, a practice that symbolizes for him a return "to the original womb, the ocean." Spirituality, vaguely defined and with only the barest traces of traditional religion, is the height of fashion these days, and if this book is any indication Hollywood remains extremely fashionable. Still—and this really is more important—to one degree or another Mr. King's famous friends are opening up their hearts and minds to the Divine Mystery. Indeed the only interviewees who said they never pray were Dr. Jack Kevorkian and the ice cream activists Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, an ironic, but somehow fitting, trio. As a result, this slight and, to be frank, rather vapid book manages to give a nice kick in the pants to those of us believers who don't spend as much time in prayer as we should. And what of its author? His interviews, not to mention his conversations with the blessedly persistent Rabbi Katsof, seem to have had an effect. In the book's final pages the heretofore stubbornly agnostic Larry King offers up his own first . . . tentative . . . prayer. If he keeps it up, all that chatting may have been worth it.

— *Cris Rapp*

THE WAY OF THE (MODERN) WORLD: OR, WHY IT'S TEMPTING TO LIVE AS IF GOD DOESN'T EXIST. By CRAIG M. GAY. *Eerdmans. 349 pp. $22.*

That moderns go about their lives without much reference to God is not news. This analysis of modern politics, economics, and culture builds upon the analyses of Charles Taylor and Max Weber to argue that modernism is inherently secular and leads moderns into disastrous self-absorption and relativism. A personalist anthropology, modeled on the relations among the three persons of the Trinity, is the antidote to our secularist tendencies to solipsism. Gay, an associate professor at Regent College in Vancouver, paints a bleak picture of life at the end of the millennium. Surely all the institutions of the free market need not be jettisoned before we can worship God freely, and it is unlikely that all critics of modernity are

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"anti-Protestant" for wanting to revive the virtue theories associated with Aristotle and Aquinas. Gay might take more note of Michael Novak and John Paul II, inter alia, who have given some thought to how Christians relate to the institutions of the modern political economy. But as Richard John Neuhaus says in his plug for the book, "Gay joins erudition to lucidity in exploring the soullessness of a modernity blind to the ultimately personal character of all that is."

AMERICA'S IMPERIAL BURDEN: IS THE PAST PROLOGUE? By ERNEST W. LEFEVER. *Westview. 194 pp. $24.*

A veteran proponent of "moral realism" in the Niebuhrian vein offers sober and sobering reflections on the fact that the world's only remaining superpower has no guiding philosophy for the exercise of its world influence. Lefever, who was the founding president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, is rightly worried by the current paucity of public debate about foreign policy, and makes a valuable contribution to remedying that unhappy circumstance.

SAMUEL JOHNSON: THE LIFE OF AN AUTHOR. By LAWRENCE LIPKING. *Harvard University Press. 372 pp. $35.*

This is a beautiful book that no devotee of Dr. Johnson will want to miss. Of course, there's no competing with Jackson Bate's magnificent biography, and Lipking of Northwestern University doesn't try. His tack, as the subtitle indicates, is to trace the development of Johnson as a hack writer on his way to becoming an author, a title of great distinction in Johnson's mind and in his dictionary. Along the way, Lipking deftly and devastatingly takes on current critical fashions that have declared "the death of the author." Of most particular interest is Lipking's pressing of the question, Why did Johnson write? The answer, for all Johnson's witty remarks about writing for money, is that Johnson wrote to serve, and, most particularly, to serve the moral formation of the young. *Samuel Johnson* is complex in reasoning and graceful in execution; it is a major achievement.

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR'S CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA. By PETER M. J. STRAVINSKAS. *Our Sunday Visitor. 1,040 pp. $39.95.*

A revised and updated edition of a book that many have welcomed as a handy desktop reference. An encyclopedia by one author is bound to reflect a certain perspective, and in this case that perspective is to stick to the basics and adhere firmly to traditional practice and magisterial teaching.

AFFIRMATIONS AND ADMONITIONS. Edited by GABRIEL FACKRE and MICHAEL ROOT. *Eerdmans. 124 pp. $16 paper.*

Seven essays offering an overview of where Lutheranism now is and where it is going in ecumenical relations with Reformed, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic churches.

A SHORT HISTORY OF ETHICS: A HISTORY OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY FROM THE HOMERIC AGE TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. Second Edition. By ALASDAIR MACINTYRE. *University of Notre Dame Press. 280 pp. $18.*

The second edition of this classic will be more widely read than the first, one expects, if only because in the intervening three decades the author has become perhaps the most important moral philosopher in the English-speaking world. One finds MacIntyre wrestling in 1966 with many of the themes that made his 1981 book *After Virtue* such a watershed: moral philosophy cannot be done abstractly or ahistorically; ethical concepts rely upon a surrounding culture to give them meaning; twentieth-century philosophy suffers from ignoring the nature of moral discourse; Aristotle has much more than a little to offer. In the introduction to the second edition, MacIntyre expresses surprise that thirty years later he still agrees with so much of the book. He concedes to his critics that his discussions of Christianity, the British Enlightenment, Kant, and the Oxford consequentialist R. M. Hare all needed refinement and further study, some of which he has already done and some of which will wait for "when I finally do write that as yet nonexistent book that I think of as *A Very Long History of Ethics.*"

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POLITICS AND RELIGION. Edited by ROBERT WUTHNOW. *Congressional Quarterly. Two volumes, 1,000 pp. $298.75.*

Ambitious projects should not be criticized for falling somewhat short of their worthy ambitions. The subject indicated by the title is so vast that it would require many more than two volumes to treat it comprehensively. With so many contributors and with principles of selection that are not always evident, it is not surprising that the entries are of uneven quality. Nonetheless, this is a very useful reference and deserving of a place in any library serious about the intersection of religion and public life.

A CASE AGAINST ACCIDENT AND SELF-ORGANIZATION. By DEAN L. OVERMAN. Foreword by Wolfhart Pannenberg. *Rowman & Littlefield. 244 pp. $28.*

Philip E. Johnson is a very smart lawyer who writes about evolutionary biology. Another very smart lawyer, Dean L. Overman, has written a book that covers biology and also mathematics, particle astrophysics, probability theory, and philosophical logic. Both justify their poaching on academic territory because as lawyers, they are trained to sniff out when evidence will not hold up under scrutiny, and the scientific evidence does not indicate that life is merely an accident. Overman's "brief"

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finds implausible the claims that life evolved from nonlife by chance and that the conditions for life in the universe are without cause. Expert scientific witnesses from Harvard, Princeton, and Cambridge find his arguments convincing. The verdict? Scientists who address these subjects tend to beg the question, generating implausible scenarios as a result. As clear and straightforward an argument as one can find.

THE POLITICS OF ARISTOTLE. Translated, with introduction, analysis, and notes by PETER L. PHILLIPS SIMPSON. *University of North Carolina Press. 274 pp. $39.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.*

A PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENTARY ON THE POLITICS OF ARISTOTLE. By PETER L. PHILLIPS SIMPSON. *University of North Carolina Press. 476 pp. $49.95.*

This affordable translation and accessible commentary walk the reader through the arguments of Aristotle's work on how men live together in society. Professor Simpson emphasizes the philosophical arguments of the text, rather than the philological or rhetorical readings of other commentators, leading him to insert for philosophical context the last chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics* at the beginning of the translation, and to include a helpful analytical outline of the main arguments. His Commentary, based on this outline, engages modern scholarship with verve and charity, qualities rare even in Aristotle scholarship.

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER: THE ANNULMENT CRISIS IN AMERICAN CATHOLICISM. By ROBERT H. VASOLI. *Oxford University Press. 252 pp. $25.*

The annulment of marriages has been grossly misunderstood by those outside the Church for centuries. Recently, though, American Catholics have become confused as well—at least in part due to the explosion in the granting of annulments that makes a declaration of nullity seem little different from a divorce. Here Vasoli, recently retired from Notre Dame's sociology department, looks at the changes in the practice and theory of American marriage tribunals to explain what a declaration of nullity is and why 75 percent of all annulments in the world occur in the United States. As he tells it, canon law theologians "discovered" in *Gaudium et Spes* (#48) the mention of "the community [i.e. wholeness] of life," which they read as establishing under canon law a right "to a caring, interpersonal relationship." This vague new right, when combined with the shallow psychologizing of the postconciliar era, led to an explosion of marriages annulled essentially on the reasoning that since even canon lawyers are confused over what it means to get married, few nonexperts can be expected to appreciate what they are getting into. The tribunals thus presume something as common as marriage to be virtually unknowable to virtually everybody. Add to this change in outlook the procedural abuses Vasoli documents, and one can understand why there is what many are calling an annulment crisis. Though Vasoli sometimes lets his emotions lead him into rhetorical excesses, there is much to be learned from his research and analysis. His bleak conclusions leave him with only one suggestion for reform—overhaul everything.

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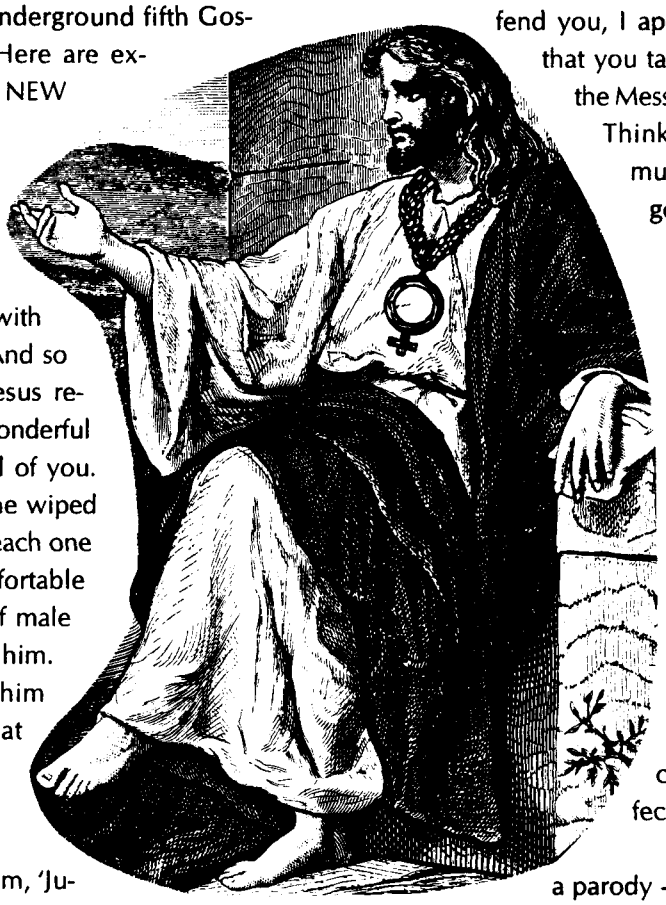
The Politically-Correct Jesus

If you're annoyed with the state of the churches, maybe it's because you're just *out of it*. Many clergy don't really go by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John anymore. They go by an underground fifth Gospel you're not aware of. Here are excerpts, first revealed in the NEW OXFORD REVIEW:



"Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus said to his disciples, 'You will fall away because of me.' Peter declared, 'Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And so said all of the disciples. Jesus remarked to them, 'What a wonderful support system I have in all of you. Truly, I am touched.' And he wiped away a little tear, and gave each one a tender hug, feeling comfortable with the delicate balance of male and female energies within him.

"Later, Judas came to him in the Garden, and a great crowd with swords and clubs. And Judas said, 'Hail, Master!' And he kissed Jesus. Jesus said to him, 'Judas, would you betray the Child of Humanity with a kiss? Of course it's perfectly understandable, and I want to assure you this day that you are not to blame for this weakness. Rather, I blame your patriarchal family and this brutal, materialistic society for pushing you into this desperate state.'

"Then they seized Jesus and brought him to the high priest, who said to him, 'I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah.' Jesus answered, 'I know what I said in the past might seem shocking. So I wish to offer a proverbial olive branch and be sensitive to your feelings. If I've said anything to offend you, I apologize. I'd like to suggest that you take what I said about being the Messiah in a more nuanced way. Think of me, therefore, not so much as a god but as another good person, merely adding my voice to the rainbow of voices.'

"And they unbound Jesus and sent him on his way, admonishing him to be more careful about what he said in public in the future. And so he did, and he lived happily ever after."

Well, what a sweet fellow! A gender-neutral, nonjudgmental, ecumenically-sensitive Jesus — perfect for our times!

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Making the Case for Moral Hypocrisy

Our reviewer had some very positive things to say about Cynthia Gorney's *Articles of Faith: A Frontline History of the Abortion Wars* (Dave Andrusko, "The Pro-Life Movement Then and Now," November 1998). Phyllis Orrick interviews Gorney in the *New York Press*, and the interview sheds light on the troubled minds and souls of people who know there is something radically wrong with the abortion regime of *Roe v. Wade* (1973), yet hold on tenaciously to the claim that they are "pro-choice." Orrick, who graduated from high school in 1970, says of that time, "If you even questioned the pro-choice position, it was blasphemy." She asks Gorney, "Did you get unnerved when you began to understand the other side?" Gorney: "You sort of back into it. The first thing you learn is there are enormously intelligent and thoughtful people on both sides of this. I'm a fairly conventional modern American woman of my age group. . . . I should have been old enough to know these stories, but somehow they're not part of our folklore, they're not known."

Among the things Gorney learned in the course of her research is that in the late 1960s and early 1970s "all the impetus for the right-to-life movement was coming from Catholics. It's important to say *Catholics* and not the Catholic Church. Although the Church, capital C, was opposed to abortion, one of the things that really p----- off a lot of the people who were involved in early opposition efforts is this notion, which in part comes from old-fashioned anti-Catholic bigotry, that they were only doing what they were doing because they were snapping to attention under the orders of some leader, i.e., the Pope. That's an old calumny that Catholics have been dealing with for decades." As for the Protestants, evangelical and oldline, at that time they were all on the other side. "When *Roe* came down, the Southern Baptist position was, 'We don't like abortion; but it can be acceptable under certain circumstances.' Second, 'We don't like these Roman Catholics shoving their collective position down our throats.'" Only in the late 1970s did evangelical Protestants finally come aboard the pro-life cause, where today they are frequently in positions of leadership.

Gorney has definite views also about pro-abortion organizations such as the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL): "They have a very nice suite of offices in downtown Washington; they have a massive fundraising campaign every year. They have a lot of employees, good people all, and what do they do if the battle's won? I don't know the answer." But she has some advice for the pro-abortion movement: "You need to get out of the defensive crouch, and you need to see that to a large extent you have won the battle. It's not going to be illegal in this country unless five members of the Supreme Court drop dead tomorrow and a Republican is President."

Candid Confusion

In researching the book, Gorney came to the conclusion that there is no doubt about it being a baby that is killed by abortion. Her explanation of how she deals with that, which is both candid and confused, is not without interest. "If we're going to make policy on it, we probably should see what it is that we're making legal. Then we may do what we need to do, which is to say, 'this is really horrible, and we have to do it anyway.' See, that's what I think the tactic ought to have been on some level from the very beginning. . . . Like you have to take responsibility for what you're doing. Another problem is, if you're going to take a pro-choice position in this country, you have to be willing to say, 'I understand this is moral hypocrisy, I wish it weren't so, but it's better than the alternative.' It is moral hypocrisy when we say, 'In this room, you get to get rid of your twenty-weeker and we'll call it a

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fetus, and in that room, we're going to do everything we can to save your twenty-weeker and call it a baby.'"

Recall Paul Swope's article, "Abortion: A Failure to Communicate" (FT, April 1998), which describes how women who acknowledge that they are killing their children nonetheless say it is the least of three evils. The two greater evils, in this view, are keeping the child or giving birth to a child who will be adopted, either of which, these women believe, would be a kind of "death" for them. Better the baby should die. In the Gorney interview, the "alternative" to this "really horrible" thing is illegal abortion, or at least that's the way the editors played it, picturing her against a field of opposing placards, one depicting coathangers and the other unborn children. But, of course, the coathanger is not the alternative. Were abortion entirely outlawed, there would no doubt be some illegal abortions, and they would be as "safe" for the woman as are today's abortuaries. The technology of abortion is inexpensive and readily available, and abortionists will not need to—and, in fact, never did—resort to coathangers.

The Price of Admission

One real "alternative" is for Cynthia Gorney and people of like conviction to stop calling themselves pro-choice. That would come with a price, however. She would not then be given a flattering interview in *New York Press*, or almost anywhere else outside the pro-life movement. And it is very doubtful that Simon & Schuster would be interested in her next book, at least if it dealt with abortion. Saying that you are pro-choice—no matter how reluctantly pro-choice—is the admission ticket to the American establishment. The discussion of the "alternative" raises a yet more interesting question. Several years ago in the *New Republic*, Naomi Wolf launched the argument among feminists and pro-choicers that abortion should be defended with the candor and moral anguish that befits the killing of a child. The pro-abortion movement has resisted that argument, and understandably so. Its leaders rightly fear that their cause cannot survive the truth of what is done in abortion.

Championing "moral hypocrisy" is not a winning platform. One cannot coherently say that innocent human beings have an inherent right not to be killed and, at the same time, say that people have a private right to kill innocent human beings. Some people, perhaps many people, can live with such a flagrant contradiction, but it is not sustainable over the long run. Its unraveling would not require the sudden death of five Supreme Court justices. NARAL and Planned Parenthood know that. Their defense of the license created by *Roe* is utterly dependent upon perpetuating the lie, denying what it is that abortion does.

For Cynthia Gorney and those of like conviction, the "alternative" is acting on the truth they know. It is saying something like this: "I have been forced to recognize that abortion is the killing of an innocent child, and that is always wrong. We must do everything we can to work toward a society in which every unborn child is protected in law and welcomed in life. I don't know exactly how we do that, but I do know there is no more urgent and public question than the question of who belongs to the community for which we accept common responsibility. I am not pro-choice." Unlike the embrace of "moral hypocrisy," that alternative will exact a social price.

FT

ON NOT DOING WITHOUT

The Rev. Diane Walker is a United Church of Canada minister serving four rural parishes outside Hamilton, Ontario, and a great fan of this journal. Which is another reminder that you cannot always judge clerics by their denomination. She also very much likes my book *Freedom for Ministry*, and uses it in supervising pastoral interns and seminarians. *But* . . . she thinks my discussion there of money and ministry must have been written by a celibate. She doesn't quite put it that way, but she would be right if she did. Others have raised similar questions about that part of the book —which, I should add, is not a big part of the book —but nobody has put it so well as she does in her letter, which, with her permission, I herewith propose for your reading:

"Some years ago, when our four children were little I agreed wholeheartedly with what you wrote about the simplicity of the pastoral home operating on a rather limited budget. We lived in a manse, on one pastor's income, and a little extra that came in from supply preaching by the other preacher in the house. The children had home-made cookies and home-made trousers and we lived very carefully, below the government-defined poverty line and eligible for full subsidy at nursery school and the YMCA. For the past year, we have been living on one and three-quarters pastoral incomes, putting us about the middle of the middle class. We have purchased our own home, with a big mortgage. Our income is bigger but so are our expenses: the mortgage of course, but also high levels of savings for children's education and our own retirement. It would not do to rely on inheritances from parents or the benefices of our children for our own old age, and while manse living means being free of the headaches of home ownership (the hot-water tank

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and the roof are someone else's problem), retiring from a manse means retiring homeless, and few can save from a minister's salary to take on a mortgage at age sixty-five. Yes, the denomination does provide a 'retirement village,' but the thought of spending one's golden years in a never-ending presbytery meeting is a mighty spur to saving. So here we are with an income bigger than we could ever have imagined, which outgoes as quickly as it incomes.

"But, because you have written in a rather idealistic way about the gracious simplicity and peacefulness of living with great financial constraint, now that I have done that, I want to tell you about the freedom that has come to our household with the injection of a little extra cash. To know that we can order pizza for supper a couple of times a month, and go on a vacation every third year, and tell the orthodontist to go ahead with the treatment plan, these are wonderful luxuries. Yes of course, all of our sports equipment is still second hand, and we buy no-name groceries, and we drive our cars until they lie down and die. We still only eat steak a few times a year and a roast of beef is a big occasion. But oh, the luxury of walking into the grocery store and knowing I can buy pretty well what I want, the delight of being able to hand the eleven-year-old the ten dollars to go to the movies with the other girls on the block.

"You see, even when their parents have made decisions about simplicity and aiming for a nonmaterialistic life, children still need shoes, and while they may not need Nikes or Reeboks, unfortunately ministers and their families tend to live in middle-class neighborhoods and have middle-class friends. So when the class trip lasts four days and costs three hundred dollars, it is important that your thirteen year old be able to afford to go. After all the years of 'Perhaps next time' and 'Well we'll see,' I had so much fun that back to school season when, for the first time, each of them got a new back pack and new shoes.

"I do worry about us getting caught up in the mindless, rampant consumerism of our culture, or, more specifically, I worry about it happening to our kids. We undertake all manner of attempts to counteract it, by giving and encouraging them to give, and by making the really conspicuous consumerism in our house focus on books and music, concerts and tuition fees. There is a mighty spiritual danger in having, owning, acquiring, desiring. But my caution is that we not idealize, too much, the notion that doing without is always the very best training for our children. It can teach them envy, discontent, and resentment, even when our goal is to teach them the joys of living simply and in accordance with God's will."

FT

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

I first met Abraham Joshua Heschel in 1965, when he was fifty-eight and I a kid of twenty-nine. The occasion had to do with defending protestors against the Vietnam war, which led to the formation of Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam (CALCAV). We hit it off in a big way, and ours became an intense intellectual and spiritual friendship until his death in December 1972. We both loved to argue, and mainly we argued about the connections and conflicts between the Jewish and Christian ways of being children of Abraham. I thought he was too enamored of what I viewed as an excessively easy pluralism. He thought I was too insistent in my Christian particularism. For hours beyond number we went back and forth, often in his book-crammed office high in the tower of Jewish Theological Seminary, he smoking his cannon-sized cigars and I puffing on my pipe until the air was so thick we had to open the window even in the dead of winter. (He quit the cigars after a minor heart attack a few years before he died.) Of course I learned much more than he did from these exchanges. Heschel was a very learned man, and a great soul.

His books are still in print (e.g., *The Earth is the Lord's, The Sabbath, Man is Not Alone, God in Search of Man*) and I warmly recommend them. Since his death twenty-six years ago, something of a Heschel cult has sprung up. In fact, it had already sprung during his lifetime. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, the first volume of the biography by Edward Kaplan and Samuel Dresner appeared, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness* (Yale University Press). It has been admirably and admiringly reviewed by Rabbi David Novak, one of Heschel's star students, in these pages (October 1998). It is also reviewed in *Commentary* by Jon Levenson of Harvard, a frequent contributor to this journal, under the title "The Contradictions of A. J. Heschel." While Levenson, too, admires Heschel, he has some big problems.

Heschel came from a dynasty of hasidic rabbis in Poland, took his doctorate at the University of Berlin, succeeded Martin Buber as head of the *Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt, and, after escaping Nazism to America, became the most read and most influential Jewish theologian of his time. He was a devoutly observant Jew who believed there are many ways to the truth. Kaplan and Dresner say it is a wonder that he was able to "reconcile" the different worlds of which he was part. Levenson is not sure that he did. "The question of the authority of *halakhah*, traditional rabbinic law in all its specificity, is the most obvious point of division between the traditionalist world of Heschel's origins and Jewish secular modernity. But it is, or should be, a no less troubling point of division between the

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world he grew up in, and whose basic religious dictates he continued to follow, and the world of religious but non-Orthodox Judaism in which he spent his entire professional life both in Germany and later in the United States." Levenson's conclusion is that "it was not out of the reconciliation but out of the *collision* of the several worlds in which he traveled that his most profound reflections on Jewish theology and spirituality were born."

It is for others to figure out the "contradictions" in Heschel's way of being Jewish. I am interested here in another question about Heschel's thought that Levenson raises, a question that was at the heart of our friendly but intense disagreement. He notes that at the University of Berlin Heschel immersed himself in the emerging fields of aesthetics, phenomenology, and psychology (a combination in which another Polish thinker of the time was also deeply immersed—Karol Wojtyla, later to be Pope John Paul II). From this he developed his crucial understanding that God is always the *Subject* and man the *object* of divine action; the initiative is always with God. In Heschel's case this was combined with the dominant liberal Protestantism of Berlin that pitted the prophetic against the priestly, and the authentically spiritual against the religiously institutionalized. As Levenson observes, this "very dubious dichotomy . . . was a staple of Protestant biblical studies and was, moreover, often linked to anti-Jewish (and anti-Catholic) polemics."

Truth in Tradition

I think Levenson is on to something here. I want to say this very carefully, but I did at times discern a liberal Protestant streak in Heschel's thinking. In connection with my insistence on the particularity of Jesus as the Christ, he thought I should be more accommodating, like our mutual friends at Union Theological Seminary (across the street from Jewish Theological). Union was and is a bastion of liberal Protestantism. I will leave it to Levenson and others to worry about whether there was a contradiction between Heschel's leanings toward liberal universalism and his being an observant Jew. But from a Christian perspective, Heschel's uneasiness with my particularism reflected a suspicion of the incarnational.

His passionate fear, shared by liberal Protestantism, is that religiosity should somehow try to take God captive. It is a legitimate fear but, when unrestrained, leads to other equally grave distortions. There is a lovely phrase in Christian theology: *Finitum capax infinitum*—the finite is able to hold the infinite. Heschel said he believed that, but I am not sure how he did. It is precisely on the possibility of the incarnational that another Jewish theologian, Michael Wyschogrod, has made such valuable contributions. (See my discussion of Wyschogrod in FT, January 1997). Among all the reasons that I am sorry Heschel died so early is that we never got a chance to discuss Wyschogrod in this connection. Not to mention related contributions by David Novak and others. Serious theological engagement between Christians and Jews has, thank God, greatly advanced in these twenty-five years.

Make no mistake, however. Heschel had a great appreciation of the embodiment of truth in tradition. He was fond of telling the story of a woman who approached him in the synagogue, complaining that the service did not say what she wanted to say. "Madam," he responded, "you have it precisely backwards. The idea is not for the service to say what you want to say but for you to want to say what the service says." As many long-suffering congregations know, I am fond of using that in homilies.

Heschel was a great soul in a time of spiritual cripples. He looked like a prophet. It was not only little children who said that he looked like what you think God may look like. He was something of a showman, and he knew it. He knew so much, he understood so much, and he wrote like an angel. I count it among the very great gifts of my life that he was my friend.

FT

RELIGION WITHIN THE LIMITS OF LIBERALISM

The editors of *Commonweal* were taken aback by recent assertions by two sociologists, Father Andrew Greeley and Professor Peter Berger. Greeley, writing in *Commonweal*, says that the significance of Vatican II is that individual Catholics "decided that it was not wrong to be Catholic on their own terms." In the Church today, says Greeley, people who disagree with official positions and want decisions to go in another direction simply "anticipate such decisions and change on their own authority." In "Liberalism and Its Limits," the editors indicate a deep uneasiness about such freelancing.

They also find surprising Berger's essay in the *Christian Century* ("Protestantism and the Quest for Certainty"), in which he suggests that the future of mainline/oldline Protestantism may be to cater to those who see no alternative to "modern skepticism." *Sola fide*—"faith alone"—means living with uncertainty, says Berger. This assumes a "contradiction" between belief and knowledge: "If we know something, there is no reason to believe; conversely, if we say that we believe something, we

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are implying that we don't know." Those who cannot or will not live with uncertainty may seek refuge in biblical fundamentalism or in what some sociologists call "strong churches" such as the Roman Catholic. The oldline Protestant market is among those who are able to "refuse the various offers of certainty." Encouraging oldliners to consider the high promise of premising religious adherence on modern skepticism, Berger points to "the robust growth of Unitarian-Universalist churches in recent years." (Today the Unitarian-Universalist Association counts 214,000 members, up from 176,698 ten years ago.)

The *Commonweal* editors seem to accept the Greeley-Berger analysis of "the realities of modern religious practices," but indicate that more is required in order to sustain a church that is recognizably the Catholic Church. Priests and people must be accountable to a bishop who is, in turn, "accountable both to his fellow bishops and to a two-thousand-year tradition." And, presumably, to the head of the college of bishops, the Pope. Citing Cardinal Newman, they note that "without a robust principle of authority, doctrinal development is an incoherent idea." From a Catholic viewpoint, "relying ultimately on an individual appropriation of faith is not sufficient—practically or theologically."

While the editors say it is not sufficient "practically or theologically," and while they are undoubtedly right about that, their response to the Greeley-Berger thesis is almost entirely practical, indeed sociological. Touching upon the philosophical or theological, they speak of "the contest between reason and faith" in a manner remarkably similar to Berger's view of the "contradiction" between knowledge and belief. If in fact there is such a conflict between reason and faith, belief and knowledge, as is here suggested, then it would seem that there is no reasonable alternative to the kind of uncertainty described by Berger, although Protestants might want to challenge his depiction of *sola fide* as an act of existential fideism. Of course a radically different understanding of these questions is advanced in the Great Tradition from Origen through Augustine and Anselm and Thomas Aquinas and Edith Stein and, most recently, John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason).

The editors are right that the Greeley-Berger argument poses problems both "practically and theologically." The appropriate response, however, is an intellectually rigorous address to the theological, which necessarily includes the philosophical. Finally, I note in passing that Berger's article, which is written in his typically feisty style and has deservedly attracted considerable attention, is right in noting that there are still vibrant local congregations in all the oldline denominations. They are—without exception in my experience—local churches that vehemently reject their denominational leadership's adherence to the doctrine of modern skepticism.

FT

THE WAY OF REVOLUTIONS

In many ways, the best single book on the civil rights movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. is still the late Ralph David Abernathy's 1989 autobiography, *When the Walls Came Tumbling Down.* Critics savaged the book, in part because it provided details of some of the less savory aspects of the movement, and of Dr. King's private life, but there is no doubt that the book was intended as an act of homage to Dr. King. Each man was, beyond question, the other's best friend. I knew them both reasonably well and am confident that was the case. Historians such as Taylor Branch (*Parting the Waters* and *Pillar of Fire*) treat Abernathy as something of a clown, an incompetent egotist who was out of his depth. But I suspect that what they have against Abernathy is that, when all is said and done, he was a deeply conservative man.

The most affecting part of his autobiography is the remembrance of his childhood in the deep South. His account radiates his immense pride in being part of the human dignity manifest in his parents and family, the Abernathies of Hopewell, Alabama. In a time when black history is told in monothematic terms of victimization, Abernathy recalled something else that once was and is now almost entirely lost. "The truth is," he wrote in his introduction, "after a few years people tend to forget their past. . . . I find that idea a little frightening, particularly when I see so many blacks who neither remember nor understand their past. If we are to survive and prosper as a people, we cannot forget who we are or where we came from." The autobiography is not polemical, but neither does it disguise his dismay at the still dominant fashion of blacks trashing their own history, turning it into an epiphenomenon of white racism.

Hopewell, Alabama, was a wonderful place to grow up. There were only two things, two interrelated things, terribly wrong with it: legally mandated segregation and the failure of whites to respect black folk as they deserved to be respected. When Ralph Abernathy hooked up with Martin King in the 1950s and the civil rights movement was launched, the goal of the movement was very clear: to right those two wrongs. Abernathy knew what it would mean for the movement to succeed. It would

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mean his parents did not have to go to the back of the line at local stores, and white folk would address them as Mr. and Mrs. Abernathy. But of course the movement became something else, an all-purpose vehicle on which sundry leftisms hitched a ride. By 1965, with the rise of "black power" and assorted "radicalizations," the hitchhikers had taken the wheel.

Dr. King would live for three more years, but even before his death, Abernathy viewed with bewilderment what the movement had become. Who were these hordes of angry, vindictive, anti-American, countercultural, drug-tripping aliens who had hijacked his and Martin's movement? Of course they viewed Abernathy as an anachronism, and, although it is conveniently forgotten today, they also dismissed Dr. King as "De Lawd" whose day was past. Both were derided as reformists in a time of revolution. As is so often the case with those who help set great historical forces in motion, Abernathy concludes his account, in effect, on the remorseful note: "That is not what we meant. That is not what we meant at all." To be sure, there was all that movement rhetoric about turning the world upside down, and Abernathy contributed his share to it. But, finally, Ralph Abernathy just wanted to change Hopewell, Alabama, and other places like it—to make good places better by the decencies of freedom and respect.

These reflections are occasioned by John Lewis' new book, *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (Simon & Schuster, $26). Lewis, too, was from a small town in Alabama, and, like Abernathy, he remembers it lovingly. He, too, was caught up in a vortex of change he did not understand, ending up as the head of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee). In the great 1963 March on Washington he was viewed as a firebrand, and almost denied his place at the podium by the older and "more responsible" leaders of the movement, including Dr. King. Soon Lewis would get his turn to be "it" in the game of more-radical-than-thou, when Stokely Carmichael and others took over SNCC to turn it into a nonstudent violent dictatorship of "participatory democracy." Almost overnight, yesterday's firebrand was today's has-been.

The first six sections of *Walking With the Wind* tell that part of the story, and tell it very well. The seventh and final section is about his surprise defeat of the elegant Julian Bond in a race for a Georgia congressional seat, and his reelection to that seat again and again and again. In Congress he is a conventionally liberal politician. The book does not so much conclude as it trails off into talk about keeping the faith, fighting the good fight, having a dream, and so forth. In the last chapter, titled "Onward," we are told about his triumph in getting the plans for a freeway changed. Or maybe it was a shopping mall. Whatever. But the fragments of the dream come through in his final words: "As a nation, if we care for the Beloved Community, we must move our feet, our hands, our hearts, our resources to build and not to tear down, to reconcile and not to divide, to love and not to hate, to heal and not to kill. In the final analysis, we are one people, one family, one house—the American house, the American family."

I'm sure John Lewis is a good and decent man. But where he has ended up is more Mario Cuomo than Martin King. That may not be an entirely bad thing, but it is yet another indication that the walls came tumbling down a long time ago.

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JOSEPH RATZINGER, CHRIST'S DONKEY

Born in Bavaria on Holy Saturday of 1927, Joseph Ratzinger's life has been entirely within and for the Church, which, he is convinced, is the way of greatest service to the world. This and much else become evident in his remarkable account just published by Ignatius, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927-1977* (300 pp., $14.95 paper), which takes the reader from his childhood to his appointment as Archbishop of Munich. The years in Rome as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith will, one hopes, be the subject of another memoir. But there is a great deal in this first installment that casts light on the mind and soul of the man who, next to the Pope himself, has had the greatest intellectual influence in shaping the direction of the Catholic Church over these past twenty years.

Tolstoy was wrong, I believe, about happy families all being happy in the same way. It is unhappy families that exhibit a dreary sameness deserving of today's dismal term "dysfunctional." There is a freshness and wonder in Ratzinger's depiction of the happy family in which he was reared, under the shadow of the horror that was the Third Reich. Family and Church were, for him, inseparable, and he clearly saw Hitler as the enemy of both. Nazism was at its heart a religious movement that, by its own evil lights, had to attack a Church that championed a "foreign Jewish and Roman" faith. His father, a village policeman, saw this from the beginning. "With unfailing clairvoyance he saw that the victory of Hitler would not be a victory for Germany but a victory of the Antichrist which would surely usher in apocalyptic times for all believers, and not only for believers."

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Young Ratzinger had to spend some time in a military work brigade, always hoping for the victory of the allies, and being irritated by the way the Americans seemed to be taking their own sweet time in prosecuting the war. The chief lesson he draws from the war years, however, is a lesson about the Church. "Despite many human failings, the Church was the alternative to the destructive ideology of the Nazis. In the inferno that had swallowed up the powerful, she had stood firm with a force coming to her from eternity. It had been demonstrated: The gates of hell will not prevail against her."

From his childhood to the present, the Church is exemplified, above all, in her liturgy. This, his memoir suggests, is what has gone most seriously wrong since the Second Vatican Council. As a young boy, "It was a riveting adventure to move by degrees into the mysterious world of the liturgy which was being enacted before us and for us there on the altar. It was becoming more and more clear to me that here I was encountering a reality that no one had simply thought up, a reality that no official authority or great individual had created. This mysterious fabric of texts and actions had grown from the faith of the Church over the centuries. It bore the whole weight of history within itself and yet, at the same time, it was much more than the product of human history." As a seminarian and young priest he was a great proponent of the liturgical movement, and was later gratified to see its principles embodied in the Council's constitution on the liturgy. "I was not able to foresee that the negative sides of the liturgical movement would later reemerge with redoubled strength, almost to the point of pushing the liturgy toward its own self-destruction."

What happened is that the liturgy suddenly became something other than the lived experience of the Church through the centuries. The "new liturgy" of Paul VI was the product of liturgical experts imposed by official authority. Within half a year, the old Missal, which had its roots in "the sacramentaries of the ancient Church and had known continuous growth over the centuries," was almost totally prohibited. This "introduced a breach into the history of the liturgy whose consequences could only be tragic." The liturgy appeared "no longer as a living development but as the product of erudite work and juridical authority"; it became something "made," something within our own power of decision rather than something received as a gift. "I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today largely derives from the disintegration of the liturgy. . . . This is why we need a new liturgical movement which will call to life the real heritage of the Council."

Always a Questioner

Milestones testifies to a young man's spiritual and intellectual excitement in engaging theological, philosophical, and scientific movements that opened up new worlds. "Being young, we were questioners above all," he says. There were de Lubac and Danielou recovering the early fathers, Martin Buber and personalism, and in the sciences thinkers such as Planck and Heisenberg moving beyond the Enlightenment's rationalist scientism and its hostility to religious thought. There was, above all, the encounter with Augustine, whom Ratzinger still calls "my great master." He cannot say the same of Thomas Aquinas, "whose crystal-clear logic seemed to me to be too closed in on itself, too impersonal and ready-made." He allows that this is probably because he was presented with "a rigid, neo-scholastic Thomism," but, in any event, he thought Thomas "simply too far afield from my own questions."

He was most deeply engaged by biblical scholarship and writes that "exegesis has always remained the center of my theological work." His academic career was almost derailed when his *Habilitation* (the degree beyond the doctorate and necessary for teaching) was not accepted the first time around. He wrote on the concept of revelation in the High Middle Ages, and especially in Bonaventure, and offended a teacher who thought himself to be the expert on such questions. Much Catholic theology, he says, had fallen into the habit of referring to Scripture—or to Scripture and tradition—as "the revelation," as though it were a thing. From Bonaventure he learned that revelation is always an act. "The word 'revelation' refers to the act in which God shows himself, and not to the objectified result of this act. Part and parcel of the concept of revelation is the receiving subject. Where there is no one to perceive revelation, no re-*vel*-ation has occurred because no *veil* has been removed. By definition, revelation requires a someone who apprehends it."

Later, as a *peritus* (theological expert) at the Council, he would come to see the importance of recognizing the Church as the apprehending subject in revelation. Theologians at the Council began to speak of the "material completeness" of the Bible, and Ratzinger suggests that this "catchword" resulted in a curious and mischievous version of *sola scriptura*. "This new theory, in fact, meant that exegesis now had to become the highest authority in the Church," he observes. Everything was to be subjected to the judgment of biblical scholarship, and biblical scholarship was understood in "scientific" historical-critical terms. The consequence is that "faith had to recede into the region of the indeterminate and constantly changing that is the very nature of historical or would-be historical hypotheses." Although the idea of the Bible's "material completeness" was rejected by the Council, the after-life of the phrase has distorted the

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way in which the Council has often been understood. "The drama of the post-Conciliar era," Ratzinger writes, "has been largely determined by this catchword and its logical consequences."

Scripture and Magisterium

The crisis in biblical interpretation was the Cardinal's subject when we invited him to give the Erasmus Lecture here in New York in 1988 (see *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on the Bible*, Eerdmans, 1989). In the present book he puts it this way: "Scripture is the essential witness of revelation, but revelation is something alive, something greater and *more*: proper to it is the fact that it happens and is perceived—otherwise it would not be revelation. Revelation is not a meteor fallen to earth that now lies around somewhere as a mass of rock from which you can take rock samples and submit them to analysis in a laboratory." The historical-critical method is the "analysis of rocks," while the life of the Church is the tradition that apprehends the truth, and that apprehending subject is essential to what is meant by revelation.

In discussing other theologians with whom he worked in the university, Ratzinger has nothing but generous things to say about Hans Küng, who would later become the most famous of theological dissidents. Early on he worked with Karl Rahner, perhaps the most influential academic theologian in the post-conciliar period, on a number of projects and came to realize that "Rahner and I lived on two different theological planets." Although they agreed on many things, including the above-mentioned question of Scripture and exegesis in the life of the Church, their approach to theology could not have been more different. Despite Rahner's reading in the patristic literature, "His theology was totally conditioned by the tradition of Suarezian scholasticism and its new reception in the light of German idealism and Heidegger. His was a speculative and philosophical theology in which Scripture and the Fathers in the end played no important role and in which the historical dimension was really of little significance. For my part, my whole intellectual formation had been shaped by Scripture and the Fathers and by profoundly historical thinking." It was only a matter of time before his "parting of the ways" with Rahner became evident to all.

Ratzinger was gratified by the decisions of the Council, but how they were being perceived among theologians was another matter. "The impression grew steadily that nothing was now stable in the Church, that everything was open to revision. More and more the Council [was viewed] as a big church parliament that could change everything and reshape everything according to its own desires. Very clearly resentment was growing against Rome and against the Curia, which appeared to be the real enemy of everything new and progressive." The theologians at the Council were seen, and appeared to see themselves, as the real authorities in the Church, eclipsing the teaching office of the bishops. "In his time, Luther had exchanged his priestly robes for the scholar's gown in order to show that the Scripture scholars in the Church were the ones who had to make the decisions." Something very similar was happening again.

Later, during the student turmoil of 1968, the entirety of the Christian tradition came under scathing attack from Marxist ideologists in the university. Ratzinger suggests that he was naive in assuming that the theology faculties would be a bastion of sanity: quite the opposite turned out to be the case. While his own lectures continued to be well attended and well received, many of his theological colleagues were all too eager to get on the good side of the putative revolution. At this point he began to discover what would later be called "the ecumenism of the trenches," as he made alliances with Evangelical (Lutheran) colleagues who appreciated what was at stake. "We saw that the confessional controversies we had engaged in up until now were small indeed in the face of the challenge we now confronted, which put us in a position of having to bear common witness to our common faith in the living God and in Christ, the incarnate Word."

In the mid-1970s he was embarked on the ambitious project of writing a dogmatics when his academic life was disrupted by his surprise appointment as Archbishop of Munich (actually, Munich and Freising). His reflection on the way he was received as bishop echoes his earlier description of the response of the people when, as a young man, he had been ordained priest. "So many people were welcoming my unknown person with a heartfelt warmth and joy that could not possibly have to do with me personally, but that once again showed me what a sacrament is: I was being greeted as bishop, as bearer of the Mystery of Christ. . . . The joy of the day was something very different from the acceptance of a particular person, whose capacities had still to be demonstrated. It was joy over the fact that this office, this service, was again present in a person who does not act and live for himself but for Him and therefore for all."

He does not live for himself but for Him and therefore for all. That would seem to pretty well sum up the life of Joseph Ratzinger. Not long after his appointment to Munich, the Pope asked him to come to Rome as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Augustine, his great master, had also chosen the life of a scholar but was called to be a bishop. Augustine wrote, "I am a draft animal for you, and it is in this way that I abide with you." Ratzinger concludes his memoir with this: "I have

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carried my load to Rome and have now been wandering the streets of the Eternal City for a long time. I do not know when I will be released, but one thing I do know: 'I have become your donkey, and in just this way am I with you.'"

Milestones makes it poignantly evident that, if he had had his way, Joseph Ratzinger would have fulfilled his life's work as an academic theologian. The choice was not between being an academic theologian or a church theologian, for his understanding of his work in the academy was always to serve the Church. It was a question of how he would serve the Church, and he believes that was a decision for the Church to make and for him to obey. Some of his critics no doubt wish he had remained in the academy. Many of his admirers think his appointment as prefect of CDF deprived the Church of the enormous contribution he would have made through writing and teaching. Yet others are immeasurably grateful that John Paul II called him to a universal classroom where, in a time of darkened confusion, he has encouraged students beyond number in rekindling the lights of theological inquiry in service to Christ and his Church, and therefore in service to the world.

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LITERATURE AND THE MARKET

The question is, says a friend of decidedly libertarian propensities, whether or not you believe in the market. I've never been comfortable with this talk about "believing" in the market, or believing in anything other than God and His grace. Such talk smacks of idolatry. I suppose it's the incorrigible theologian in me that weights "belief" so heavily. As for the market, I do have a devotion to freedom, a rough confidence in the common sense of most people in making decisions that affect their own lives, and a lively horror of the human costs exacted by history's experiments in replacing the free economy with alternatives ranging from soft socialism to totalitarianism. So yes, given the options on offer, I suppose I do believe in the market.

Such heavy-duty questions were occasioned by our discussion of Charles Frazier's best-selling novel, *Cold Mountain*. I had been lecturing in Cambridge at the big C. S. Lewis centennial bash and, passing through Heathrow, looked for some light reading, really bubble gum for the mind, to fill the time on the flight back. From what someone had said, *Cold Mountain* seemed to be just the thing, and it is, all in all, an entertaining read. It is also irritating, however. The phrase has become such a cliché that I try to avoid it, but in this case it seems exactly right. The novel is the quintessence of what is meant by political correctness. In its effort to be unconventional, it fits most neatly the conventions that are accepted by a large part of the book-buying public and demanded by the book-reviewing and book-promoting elite of the knowledge class.

My friend and former colleague Midge Decter has told me over the years, "The problem with you is that you don't think low." By that she means that I am inclined to respond to people with dumb ideas as though they really believe them, instead of asking what is their interest in expressing such ideas. There may be something to that. I don't know Charles Frazier at all, but if one set out to write a best-selling novel with the economically relevant arbiters of taste in mind, the result would be something very like *Cold Mountain*. For all I know Mr. Frazier wrote the book with nothing but artistic integrity in mind. I should like to think so. He has produced a little romance of considerable artistry. It is also a book that could have been written from the basest motives of pandering to regnant fashions, or at least the fashions regnant among those who are determined to be fashionable.

Backwoods Mission

The setting is toward the end of the Civil War, and a rebel deserter, disillusioned by the slaughter, is making his way toward his home and his sweetheart in Cold Mountain, North Carolina. His name is Inman, and he encounters numerous dangers and monstrosities along the way. Meanwhile, the heroine, Ada Monroe, a woman of beauty and refined sensibilities, is guided by Ruby, a plain-spoken creature of the earth, in making a go of a farm she's been left by her recently deceased minister father, a kind of Unitarian half-believer who for some reason thought he had a mission to the backwoods of North Carolina. Among the many characters who come and go in the tale, all the white men, except Inman, are swinish, brutal, or phony. All the women are good, except for three sluttish daughters who have been abused by their father. The few people of color are dignified, kind, and helpful. There is the required hint of lesbian love between Ada and Ruby, but chiefly Ada learns from Ruby's superior ecological consciousness and wondrous sensitivity to folk wisdom and Indian lore, all of which contrasts most favorably with what is called civilization.

Ada and Inman declare they don't give "two hoots" for conventional morality, and preachers are depicted as fools and frauds. Except, of course, for Ada's late father, who edified his hill country flock with long citations from the inspired Ralph Waldo

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Emerson, inviting them to join him in gnostic flight from the conventional. Inman and other rebel deserters, we are given to understand, are bitterly disillusioned with patriotism, having come to understand that the war was being fought not against unjust aggression but to protect the interests of rich slave owners. In this book the attractive Southern figures embrace the view of the war held in the North, where, conveniently, most buyers of books are to be found. Very nicely described is the encounter with an idiot hillbilly banjo player in a scene reminiscent of a memorable moment in the movie version of James Dickey's *Deliverance*. In sum, the Southerners in *Cold Mountain* are as grotesque as enlightened Northerners have been taught to believe, except for the few who are, surprisingly enough, just like us—or at least like the way we like to think we are. And, of course, as is the way with such romances, hero and heroine are united at last and set to live happily ever after. One can almost hear the sighs of the women of Westchester upon turning the last page, languorously dreaming of their Inman who, through great trial and danger, is on his way to rescue them from a world unworthy of their elevated souls.

Writing to Demand

As I say, it is a story entertainingly told, and the flight back to New York went fast enough. But when I complained to the friend mentioned at the start that Mr. Frazier might have been working off a check-list of politically correct positions and postures, he suggested that I failed to appreciate the wonders of the market. The greatest of artists, he asserted, have always supplied according to market demand. As examples he mentioned Picasso and Stravinsky, but that's outside the sphere of literature, and those instances beg the question of what is great art. All right, he said, so what about Shakespeare? From what we know the Bard had a keen eye for business and catered, if he did not pander, to what audiences wanted. With this my friend touched a delicate nerve.

As it happens, each summer I try to spend some time at the family cottage in Quebec, and each summer I take along some big chunk of the Western canon to reread, or read for the first time. This summer it was the complete works of Shakespeare. So I felt ready for my friend's challenge. Admittedly, it is not fair to compare Charles Frazier, or any writer, to the incomparable Shakespeare. Nonetheless, *Cold Mountain* can serve as representative of a vast genre that stands in stark contrast to Shakespeare's treatment of what is called conventional morality. Frazier's novel is far from being the most egregious example, but it is, for precisely that reason, the more representative.

I will not enter upon the much disputed issue of who wrote Shakespeare. (My unequivocal position is that Shakespeare was written by whoever wrote Shakespeare.) The point is that Shakespeare clearly distanced himself from the convention of not giving two hoots about conventional morality. From classical Greece through the Middle Ages and up to his own time, that convention was firmly in place. The appearance of being avant-garde and the reward of vulgar laughs were cheaply achieved by ridiculing or twitting the normative, especially in the realm of marriage and sexuality. Elizabethans such as Beaumont and Fletcher, for instance, were masters of the comic treatment of adultery and other infidelities. Not so with Shakespeare. Of course, like other dramatists of his time, he has jokes about cuckolds, but in his plays there is nothing funny about unfaithfulness or unchastity. They always invite disaster. All the troubles that come down upon the chief characters in *Measure for Measure* can be traced back to Claudio's unchastity. Having wronged Mariana, Angelo must offer the only possible restitution, which is marriage. Cressida in *Troilus and Cressida* is neither amusing or attractive, but comes across as someone who is basically rotten to all decent men. Even in *Romeo and Juliet*, with its young people overwhelmed by passionate love, the fault is not with the lovers but with their parents, and the young people marry before they mate.

As the eminent G. B. Harrison observes, "His other favorite lovers, Rosalind and Orlando, Benedick and Beatrice, march naturally forward to love in wedlock. And in his later plays—*The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*—Florizel and Perdita, Ferdinand and Miranda, pairs of lovers whom Shakespeare abundantly blesses, have the nicest regard for the sanctity of marriage." I do not go so far as Joseph Sobran and some other Shakespeare buffs who find in his work most of the articles of the Catholic catechism, but he is notably respectful of religion, and of Catholicism in particular. Note, for example, the treatment of the friars Laurence (*Romeo and Juliet*) and Francis (*Much Ado About Nothing*) and the priest in *Twelfth Night*. Of course there is Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry the Eighth*, but it is perhaps impossible to make Wolsey an attractive figure; moreover—and some experts notwithstanding—I find it impossible to credit the claim that Shakespeare wrote a play so flat and prolix as *Henry the Eighth*.

The Stuff of Art

But I digress. The point is that greatness in art is manifest in exploring and exposing the depths and complexities in the conventional. The perennial wisdom and pieties, joined to the passions of love and ambition, and defied by vices such as greed and jealousy, are the stuff of great art and great literature. Emersonian flights of pretended

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uniqueness, Whitman's unbridled indulgence of ego and desire, and off-Broadway's latest sensation "boldly" flouting conventional morality are all, by comparison, little more than the artistic acne of troubled adolescence. But it is what the masters of the market demand, and what numerous formula writers, such as Charles Frazier (albeit with more elegance than most), are ready to supply. Fortunately—and this I must grant to my friend of libertarian leanings—the market is so maddeningly multifarious that nobody can master it completely. From that happy fact, which is not unrelated to the irrepressibility of talent and intelligence, we can derive the comfort that the conventional trashers of the conventional are not, not finally, in control. Critical readers of bestsellers such as *Cold Mountain* may think that cold comfort, but it is not nothing.

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WHY "HATE CRIMES" ARE WRONG

It is a sad story, and what they did to him was despicable. These guys were drinking in a Laramie bar and University of Wyoming freshman Matthew Shepard reportedly made a pass at one of them, whereupon two young men took him out, brutally beat him, robbed him, and left him tied to a fence. A few days later, he died in hospital. It immediately became a nationwide cause celebre for gay and lesbian groups agitating for hate crime laws that include "sexual orientation." Mr. Shepard's father expressed the hope that nobody would exploit his son's death in order to push an agenda, but the agitators knew when they had come across a good thing. The lead editorial in our establishment paper was titled "Murdered for Who He Was."

The editors remind us that African-Americans, Asians, Jews, Italians, Irish, and others have been victims of hatred. "Gradually, crimes motivated by hate have come to be seen as a category of their own." It apparently took the editors some time to recognize that few such crimes are motivated by love. As to "Who He Was," the editors describe young Shepard as being "slight, trusting, and uncertain how well he would be accepted as an openly gay freshman." They add that he had spent time in Europe and "spoke three languages or more." The point being made, it seems, is that this is not just another black or Puerto Rican kid who was brutally beaten and killed. The editors are saying that he is one of us. This is a young man with whom we can, as it is said, identify. This is a murder that matters.

The editors continue, "He died in a coma yesterday, in a state without a hate-crimes law." It is hard to know what to make of that. He might have pulled out of it if Wyoming had a hate-crimes law? "Hatred can kill," the editors portentously announce. Noted for the record. Observing with satisfaction that the killers will be tried for first-degree murder, the *Times*, which is otherwise adamantly opposed to the death penalty, adds, "But his death makes clear the need for hate-crime laws to protect those who survive and punish those who attack others, whether fatally or not, just because of who they are." Apparently it needs to be made clear that beating people up and killing them is against the law. And, if it is done because of "who they are," maybe the perpetrators should be executed more than once?

The admitted purpose of gay agitation for hate-crime laws is to have homosexual acts (which in the real world define "sexual orientation") put on a par with religion, race, gender, and age as a legally protected category. There are many good reasons for thinking that a bad idea. But the very idea of "hate crimes" is highly dubious. Hate is a sin for which people may go to Hell. It is quite another thing to make it a crime for which people should go to jail. The law rightly takes motivation into account; for instance, whether someone is killed by accident or by deliberate intent. In the latter case, malice of some sort is almost always involved, but it is not the malice that makes the killing a crime. A murderer may have nothing personal against someone whom he kills for his money.

It is generally wrong to disapprove of people because of their religion, race, or gender, but it is not a crime. (An exception may be disapproval of someone whose religion includes committing terrorist acts.) The purpose of the gay movement and its advocates, such as the *Times*, is to criminalize disapproval of homosexual acts, or at least to establish in law that such disapproval is disapproved. Most Americans, it may safely be assumed, disapprove of homosexual acts. It is not within the competence of the state to declare that they are, for that reason, legally suspect. In a sinful world, sundry hatreds, irrational prejudices, and unjust discriminations abound. The homosexual movement is notable for its venting of hatred against millions of Americans whom it accuses of being "homophobic." In whatever form it takes, hatred toward other people must be deplored and condemned. But it is utterly wrongheaded to try to make hatred illegal.

David Morrison, writing in the *New York Post*, offers a further reason for thinking more than twice about laws against hate crimes. He notes *Newsweek*'s report that Mr. Shepard seems to have had a history of approaching "straight" men for sex.

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There is, says Morrison, who describes himself as a "former gay activist," a substantial subculture of the gay subculture that goes in for "rough trade"—cruising in public places for sex with straight or semi-straight toughs. He writes, "Yet the fact that a significant number of men strongly desire and pursue public sex under occasionally dangerous circumstances should influence the ongoing conversation, spurred by Shepard's death, about the necessity or wisdom of including sexual orientation in hate-crimes laws. . . . Americans should think long and hard about the making the feeling of repugnance at an unwanted sexual advance subject to additional penalties under the law. There is an old saying that hard cases make bad law. It seems to me that the 1990s have provided a corollary: Tragic cases can make bad laws more quickly. Americans should examine the calls for additional hate-crime legislation with extreme care. There is more at stake than any simple claim of human rights."

Martin Luther King, Jr. used to say, "The law cannot make you love me, but it can prevent you from lynching me. And, if you don't lynch me, you may eventually come to love me." We should certainly love our gay brothers, even as we disapprove of the acts that define them as gay. Loving them includes our saying, always lovingly, that they are wrong in trying to use the law to stigmatize those who disapprove of what they do, which is not, the *Times* to the contrary, the only or the most important thing that determines "who they are."

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ It's fine and dandy to be tolerant, but some people really do go too far. For instance, Alan Wolfe reviews Nancy L. Rosenblum's *Membership and Morals*, a book on American pluralism put out by Princeton University Press, and has this to say: "Even as we pursue justice, equality, and diversity, we need to respect and to honor difference. That turns out to be a much harder task than most liberals recognize, for it also means that we need to accept a certain amount of discrimination, venality, religious orthodoxy, wrong-headedness, perversity, and snobbery. Since humans are human, politics is very hard." Venality and perversity maybe, but do we really have to put up with religious orthodoxy?

■ "These are difficult days for Reinhold Niebuhr," writes Walter Brueggemann in *Theology Today*. Niebuhr (1892-1971) was this country's premier champion of "neoorthodoxy," which for a time successfully challenged what he viewed as the flaccid and sentimental liberalism that dominated the oldline Protestant churches. His major works, such as *The Nature and Destiny of Man* and *The Self and the Dramas of History*, had great and well-deserved influence. They stand up very well today as explorations of the human condition viewed from an Augustinian perspective and producing a "Christian realism" that takes account of the human capacity for both good and evil. But all that counts for naught in today's faddish world of theological liberalism. Niebuhr's difficulty, according to Brueggemann, is that "neoconservatives push him relentlessly into their camp." He then suggests that that is where Niebuhr belongs. Critics of Niebuhr such as Stanley Hauerwas claim that Niebuhr had no real social location. On the contrary, says Brueggemann, his social context explains everything. "It is clear to me that Niebuhr is located in an immigrant community of Germans (my community too) that had endlessly to prove (through World War II) that 'we are good Americans.' I think his subsequent Cold War stance is dominated by that unending need. This does not make it much better, but it does deliver him from the charge of lack of context." Note the dismissive pop psychology. Niebuhr's liberal anticommunism can perhaps be excused in part because of his "unending need" to prove himself a good American. The poor dear wanted to belong. This despite the fact that he spent fifty years in places such as Yale and Union Seminary in New York City, was celebrated on the cover of *Time* and elsewhere as the most influential religious thinker of his time, and was acknowledged as one of the world's most distinguished intellectuals. Never mind, it was all a pathetic effort to escape from the little immigrant community where he, and Brueggemann, began. (Mr. Brueggemann teaches at a theological seminary in Decatur, Georgia.) The apparent triumph of neoorthodoxy was very tenuous and very temporary. In the view of the Brueggemanns of the perduringly liberal theological establishment, Niebuhr's unblinking recognition of human sinfulness, his uncompromised belief in the crucial difference between freedom and totalitarianism, and the fact that he is today appreciated by those terrible neoconservatives—all combine to put him beyond the pale. It does nothing to elevate the level of discourse to speculate about what "unending need" is being served by Mr. Brueggemann's supercilious condescension toward his intellectual betters. (Brueggemann's remarks come in the course of very favorably reviewing a new book by Hauerwas, to whom he offers "hearty thanks [and] hearty congratulations." Hauerwas might someday write an interesting essay on why his relentless excoriation of theological liberalism is so warmly applauded by

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those whom he is presumably attacking.)

■ The Sunday School teacher asked the class who wanted to go to Heaven and all but one boy raised their hands. "Don't you want to go?" inquired the teacher. "Yeah," replied the boy, "but I thought you were getting a load to go right now." According to an Associated Press poll, nearly one out of every four Christian adults—about twenty-seven million people—expect Jesus to return in glory during their lifetimes. Only 61 percent of those are praying for his quick return. "Save me, Lord, but not yet."

■ Rivers of journalistic and scholarly ink are expended on the crisis of teenage pregnancy and promiscuity. Part of the problem, it seems, is that kids don't know about the birds and the bees. The following is from the *American Medical News*: "Hanna Klaus, M.D., a natural family planning expert from Bethesda, MD, discussed her Teen STAR (Sexuality Teaching in the context of Adult Responsibility) program. Its goal is to reduce teen sexual activity by teaching them to understand their fertility. In a 1997 study of 293 female and 456 male high school freshmen, almost 12 percent of the girls and 22 percent of the boys reported that they were sexually active. By the end of the program, the percentage of teens who were sexually active dropped, with only 7.8 percent of the girls and 14.6 percent of the boys reporting engagement in sexual activity. The figures are significantly lower than those found in the general U.S. population. According to 1995 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics, 22.3 percent of ninth-grade girls and 24.2 percent of ninth-grade boys are sexually active. Dr. Klaus said parents of girls reported that after participating in the program for three months, their daughters were more likely to avoid activities where sexual encounters were likely. 'Only after coming to terms with the fact that one is now biologically capable of becoming a mother or a father can awareness of this capacity be integrated into choices about present behavior which are consistent with future life goals,' she said. The Teen STAR program has been taught in fifteen countries since 1985." For more information, write Dr. Klaus at 8514 Bradmoor Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817-3810. Or contact her by e-mail: hklaus@dgsys.com (website:www2.dgsys.com/~hklaus).

■ Toronto's *Globe and Mail* styles itself, with some justice, as Canada's national newspaper. Even more than our *Times*, it is poignantly eager to be on what it nervously perceives as the cutting edge. In the last couple of years, for instance, the *Globe* has become particularly flagrant in promoting the cause of homosexuality. A Canadian reader suggests that the trendy turn is likely related to the paper's theology, so to speak. He points to an editorial commenting on a claim by some archaeologists that the battle of Jericho in the Old Testament never happened. The editors write: "The story of Joshua is just one of many that have withered under the scrutiny of scientific investigation." Unlike benighted "fundamentalists," the editorial continues, "thoughtful and introspective people have learned to separate belief in God from systems buttressed by fact." The editors would seem to prefer systems buttressed by fancy. "To a modern sensibility, faith is not a repeated recitation of events that happened thousands of years ago. It is imprecise, unregulated, and elusive, full of abstract wonder rather than concrete certainty, inspired by the heady miracle of existence rather than validated through religious wars and theological conflicts." This heady muddle of opinionating is clearly incompatible with the classic Christian teaching that faith is the repeated recitation of events that happened thousands of years ago, and that truth is validated by war and conflict. To a modern sensibility, however, natural science does not necessarily lead to atheism. "We may need to make room for something else out there on the cutting edge of neuroscience and cosmology, something inexplicable, unsystematized, irreducible to dates in history, but a kind of Creator all the same: God, for lack of a better word." Imagine reading the *Globe and Mail* over breakfast. Globaloney, for lack of a better word.

■ It was on the radio this morning and I didn't get the guy's name, but apparently he made a bundle last year and has decided to do his philanthropic duty by giving a million dollars to a medical center to provide Viagra for the poor. I suppose it's better than condoms. As Tocqueville observed, in the American democratic ethos, the egalitarian passion penetrates everywhere. Future historians might record the decline of an empire that distracted the populace with bread and Viagra.

■ The self-righteous editorial pronunciamentos of the *Times* complaining that Pius XII was indifferent to, if he did not actually collaborate in, the Holocaust have been effectively answered by, among other things, citations from their editorials published during and immediately after the war, all praising that much abused pope for his singularly courageous witness. To this might be added an observation by the former publisher of the *Times*, C. L. Sulzberger, who wrote in his 1976 book, *Go Gentle Into the Night*: "Pope Pius XII, the one pontiff with whom I was truly acquainted, was an interesting man who, after 1945, came in for what almost surely is an unfair amount of criticism because he didn't stop the conflict Hitler started and because he didn't do more to save Europe's Jews from Nazi extermination." (Thanks to gimlet-eyed Father James Burtchaell for bringing this to my attention.)

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■ This old Pope who is, as we are regularly told, out of touch with the real world continues to be the key to, among many other things, the pro-democracy revolution of our time. Adrian Karatnycky of Freedom House notes that dictatorships have been almost completely eliminated in countries with a Catholic majority. "When he became Pope in 1978, twenty-two of forty-two countries with a Catholic majority were tyrannies. All but two of these have now collapsed. These now-democratic countries include Argentina, Chile, the Czech Republic, Guatemala, Hungary, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Poland, the Philippines, and Lithuania. Mexico is also nearing the completion of its transformation to democracy, as is Croatia. Only two Catholic countries remain dictatorships: Equatorial Guinea and Cuba."

■ As it happens, I came across this on the very day that the Church celebrates St. Thomas More. James Wood of the *New Republic* is reviewing Peter Ackroyd's magnificent new biography of More (just out from Doubleday) in the *London Review of Books*. Wood does not like the Ackroyd book and, even more, he does not like More. The wonderfully temperate More of Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* is a myth, says he. In fact, as Lord Chancellor he was a fierce persecutor of heretics. It is true that More, like almost everyone else of his time, believed in religious uniformity. He was born some two hundred years too early to have a really informed appreciation of the Religion Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. But that is not all that Mr. Wood has against him. "Thomas More died in defense of an authoritarian intolerance much more powerful than a mere king's, however, for he died believing in God and in the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church. . . . He betrayed Christianity when he led it so violently into court politics and he betrayed politics when he surrendered it so meekly to the defense of Catholicism. Above all, he betrayed his humanity when he surrendered it to the defense of God." Mr. Wood is very angry in an old-fashioned way. God should have made a better world. A little later he is writing in the *New Republic* about why there are things such as tornadoes and terrorism in the world. Christians say sin and evil are the result of free will, but he isn't buying. "Either God omnipotently presides over these happenings in some way, or there is no God. But if God omnipotently presides over them, then he presides over our suffering. He watches us drown in our own incomprehension. I'm afraid that I must choose the latter explanation, even if it is not very edifying." Free will, he writes, "is clearly important for humans, but why is it important for God?" One response is that God is love and created us for love, and love is not love if it is not free. Another response is that God does not "omnipotently preside" over evil but, in the cross of Christ, bore it and bears it to the end. Mr. Wood's anger notwithstanding, it is good to see such fundamental questions raised in public forums, and I am sure St. Thomas More is beyond being offended by slander.

■ While it's encouraging to see the really big questions being taken on in unlikely places, one cannot help but notice that there are certain rules to the game. I feel rather certain, for instance, that the *New Republic* would not give Mr. Woods the same space to explain why the most plausible response to the problem of suffering is the cross and resurrection of Christ, were Mr. Woods convinced that is the case. In such forums, atheism and agnosticism are ecumenical while a Christian (or Jewish) answer is sectarian. Put differently, dissent from the orthodoxy of atheism or agnosticism is definitely suspect. Consider Ron Rosenbaum's interview with David Berlinski in the *New York Observer*. Berlinski, an expert in microbiology and mathematics, has done a couple of dynamite articles in *Commentary* on the smug securities of evolutionary dogmatists. The interview has some great moments. For complicated reasons, Berlinski was at one point involved in the study of medieval history. "Studying medieval history put me in touch with very serious scholarship," he says. "Very tentative and very disciplined. And I was shocked, moving into the sciences, how much *less* discipline there was. And how much unearned credulity was floating around current doctrine. . . . And there was a hole in the culture in that science as an institution had become a regnant priesthood, and people were taking this stuff with dreadful literalness." After Stephen Hawking's smashing success with *A Brief History of Time*, publishers rushed faddish books of cosmological theory to the market. "A lot of stuff that gets into print is simply nonsensical," says Berlinski. "Alan Guth's derivation of something from nothing [in *The Inflationary Universe*] is simply incandescent horse----. Don't tell me you're deriving something from nothing when it's transparently obvious to any mathematician that this is incandescent nonsense." Berlinski goes on in that take-no-prisoners mode, and Rosenbaum loves it. He asks him, "But if you're willing to accept intelligent design, and you don't trust the evidence for chance mutation creating complex systems, are we left utterly in the dark?" Berlinski passes the crucial test with flying colors: "I think that's the reasonable explanation. Right now, the *only* explanation is intelligent uncertainty." There you have it, the reasonable explanation of intelligent design is that there is no explanation. Had Berlinski said that intelligent design reasonably implies an intelligent designer, maybe even You Know Who, Mr. Rosenbaum's worst fears would have been

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vindicated. He said he approached the interview with Berlinski with the anxiety that the man had an "agenda," maybe he was even giving aid and support to the creationists and related kooks. But no, David Berlinski is safe, leaving Mr. Rosenbaum free to effuse: "The reward for living with doubt, in darkness, is occasional illumination: the thrilling glimpse we get of the unimaginable, of an exquisite complexity beyond the dream of mere mechanism and nucleic acids." Maybe even of revelation, but it would not do to mention it. It is easier to live in the darkness; no demands, no consequences, just enjoy the thrilling illuminations. Like children applauding the cosmic show, and congratulating one another on being the kind of people who appreciate it. Rosenbaum suggests that evolutionary psychology "could not account for the creation of the mind of Vladimir Nabokov and the incandescent plenitude of a work like *Pale Fire*." "Yeah," responds Berlinski, "that's just an unutterable mystery." "I have nothing intelligent to say about it except that I'm glad it occurred." Maybe he is even grateful it occurred. But grateful to nothing? That would be, as he perhaps recognizes, incandescent nonsense. But it is the price to be paid for admission to these forums that take on the really big questions.

■ The Democrats are increasingly the party of the rich. That is the argument very persuasively made by David Brooks in the *Weekly Standard*. In 1980, Democrats won just 25 percent of the rich vote; in 1996, Clinton got 41 percent and carried thirteen of the seventeen richest congressional districts in the country. Why this dramatic change? Abortion has a lot to do with it. "Rich Republicans," Brooks writes, "get their opinions the way they get their dress shoes. . . . If their trophy wives tell them that being pro-choice carries more prestige, then they write a check to Planned Parenthood." And are more inclined to vote Democrat. While she agrees with Brooks' general argument, Maggie Gallagher thinks he doesn't get the abortion factor quite right. She writes: "Even if they themselves are past the point where unexpected childbearing looms as a major lifestyle threat, suburban moms who drive their kids around in SUVs are passionately for abortion, because they see it as being just as necessary to maintaining orderly lives (and passing on their class status to their kids) as Weed-B-Gon and a house in a good school district. . . . So when conservative Republicans even nibble at the fringes of abortion rights, no wonder affluent matrons grow faint with horror. In the dark womb, an intruder lies in wait, threatening to disrupt the clean, orderly, sensible, admirable world they have worked so hard to build for themselves and their children." And the Democratic Party is the electoral beneficiary of fainting matrons—and, increasingly, their husbands. Needless to say, the benefit does not offset the growing appeal of the party of the common man, and woman.

■ There are few things more exclusive than inclusivism. A few years ago I expressed a measured skepticism about the initiative of Episcopal Bishop William Swing of San Francisco to launch a religious equivalent of the United Nations. The United Religions Initiative (URI) dropped the "religious" requirement in 1997 in order to make clear that it welcomed all "spiritual" movements, including New Age, Neopaganism, and the such. URI has since been adopted by a team from the Social Innovations in Global Management program at Case Western Reserve University and has received support from the Gorbachev and Soros foundations, which see it as an instrument for promoting the "global good." Conspicuously absent from URI are more traditional groups, such as Catholics and evangelical Protestants. New Age members are now insisting that the URI platform should make it clear that "fundamentalists" are not welcome. And so is born yet another very select club of universalist inspiration.

■ "Religion's in Vogue, and the Vatican is Scandalized," runs the headline in the *Times*. Hardly scandalized, simply not amused by the adolescent pranks of an Italian fashion designer who was going to send a model down the runway to a soundtrack of the Pope celebrating Mass, electronically woven into a hip-hop beat. The Vatican publicly indicated its strong disapproval, once again demonstrating Rome's cruel oppression of artistic creativity. The story continues: "Guillermo Mariotto, the designer for the Rome-based fashion house Gattinoni, made headlines during last year's fashion week by holding his show inside an Anglican church (no Catholic church would accept such a proposal) with a runway model dressed as the Virgin Mary. Mr. Mariotto said he had planned to have the model wear a crown of thorns, but was gently dissuaded by Anglican officials, who told him such a gesture might offend the Catholic Church." You know how touchy those Catholics are. Anglicans presumably have long since been offense-proofed.

■ At Norfolk State University in Virginia there is a program involving "cultural learning" that includes visiting religious communities in the area. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) successfully protested the requirement that a Muslim student observe—not participate in—services at two local churches. Presumably, the program would include visiting a mosque in Norfolk, if there is one. CAIR claimed that "the program cannot have a requirement which conflicts with the fundamental tenets of any religion." Said executive director Nihad Awad, "It is

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unconscionable for a federally funded program at a state university to ask that a student violate her religious beliefs. We are pleased that this situation was resolved successfully." If gaining familiarity with non-Muslim religious observances violates the "fundamental tenets" of Islam, good for CAIR. On the other hand, the organization's protest is hard to square with its oft-reiterated claim that Muslims are part and parcel of America's religious and cultural pluralism.

■ Admittedly, he is a librarian and so has an unabashed prejudice in favor of books and journals. Writing in the by now famous *Nicotine Theological Journal* (it has been mentioned here at least three times), D. G. Hart of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia says that the Internet and the attendant bells and whistles of the communications revolution are undermining "The Three R's of Theological Education"—reading, writing, and religious community. The argument is spirited and of many parts; the purpose is to encourage educators to "question the hype and cost of educational technology." He concludes with this: "To that end I close with a few sentences from the agrarian poet, Wendell Berry, whose reaction to electronic newspapers and 'interactive novels' provides a model for opposition to electronic libraries and 'interactive' technology. 'It disgusts me,' Berry writes, 'because I know there is no need for such products, which will put a lot of money into the pockets of people who don't care how they earn it and will bring another downward turn in the effort of gullible people to become better and smarter by way of machinery. This is a perfect example of modern salesmanship and modern technology—yet another way to make people pay dearly for what they already have.' In other words, we already have a good way of learning theology and it is right in front of us, among our faculty and within the books in our libraries. As stewards of the tradition of book learning, librarians need to ignore the sales pitches of technophiles and argue instead for the crucial place of the reading and writing of books to the survival of religious communities and theological education."

■ My sister Johanna has more children and grandchildren than the little old lady who lived in the shoe, and I take her to be an expert on the subject of moral education, which is a concern close to the heart of this journal. We take our wisdom where we can get it, and I was struck by her story illustrating that it is sometimes necessary to punish children but it is equally important that they know precisely why they are being punished. Two little boys are lying in bed at night, Johanna tells me, and the one says he's thinking about talking like a grownup. "I'm going to say 'hell' tomorrow," he announces. To which his brother responds that he's going to say "damn." The next morning the mother asks the one boy what he wants for breakfast. "What the hell," he says, "I guess I'll have Cheerios." The mother instantly grabs him, slaps him up side the head, rushes him into the bathroom, and washes out his mouth with soap. Returning to the kitchen, she asks his brother what he wants. "Oh, I don't know, but I damn sure don't want Cheerios."

■ Lovely may not be the best word for a book on such heavy-duty questions, but Regis Martin's *The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell* is lovely. Published by Ignatius (167 pp., $12.95), this little paperback is chock-full of items devotionally provocative and homiletically employable. Martin quotes von Balthasar who wrote: "It is something very astonishing that all of the ancient peoples reflected in so many diverse ways on the 'hereafter' while modern people are scarcely interested in the matter. It is as though their wings had been clipped; as though the spiritual organ for the transcendent had atrophied." And Peter Berger, who writes that "with the onset of secularization the divine fullness began to recede, until the point was reached when the empirical sphere became both all-encompassing and perfectly closed in upon itself. At that point man was truly alone in reality." Yes, people chatter about Heaven but in such a sentimentalized way that makes it an awfully boring prospect. Pagans of earlier times knew better. "Worshiping snakes or trees, . . . devils rather than nothing: crying for life beyond life, for ecstasy not of the flesh," as Eliot put it. Regis Martin writes: "They remain, therefore, deeply kindred to Christian thought and practice in ways in which our secular neighbors are not. The merest savage dancing madly about the entrails of a disemboweled turkey in obscene search of God is surely a more sympathetic figure than some fussy-minded, post-Christian shopper, looking for turkey drumsticks under a cellophane wrapper amid the plastic perfections of a suburban supermarket. At least the savage is in search of authentic liberation from sin and death, which neither the post-Christian nor his vaunted machinery can confer. It is this terrible craving of the pagan soul for reassurance about its own essential immortality—the possibility of real purification from sin and iniquity; the aboriginal, consuming hunger for wholeness, for atonement with itself and God, the world, and others—that fundamentally describes the persisting, immemorial conditions for the very existence of religion itself." From its unblinking treatment of evil through to its ending note on Dante's "love that moves the sun and the other stars," *The Last Things* is a little book very much worth getting, and pondering.

■ Many corporations are licensing their brand names and logos to be used on shoes, sweatshirts, and whatnot. "We live in a secular society, but

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people still love to surround themselves with icons that move them," said Seth M. Siegel of the Beanstock Group, which handles licensing for, among others, Coca-Cola and Harley-Davidson. Among the others is the Vatican Library Collection. In that connection, said Mr. Siegel, he would like to "push a little bit away from religious items" in favor of inspiration and fine-art products. Whoever is in charge of licensing at the Vatican might take note that Mr. Siegel seems to think that religion is weak on inspiration and fine art.

■ We received letters of appreciation for publishing St. Thomas Aquinas' prayer *Ante Studium* a while back, and some suggested we should do that kind of thing more often. Dr. Patrick Riley of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, says that when he taught college students he would ask the class, "Anybody want St. Thomas' prayer for getting your life in order?" and all of them did. Herewith the prayer:

Ad vitam sapienter instituendem

Concede nobis, quaeso, misericors Deus, quae tibi sunt placita, ardenter concupiscere, prudenter investigare, veraciter agnoscere, et perfecte implere ad laudem et gloriam nominis tui. Amen.

For the wise ordering of life

Grant us, I beg You, merciful God, to desire ardently the things that please You, to investigate them prudently, to understand them truly, and to fulfill them perfectly, for the praise and glory of Your name. Amen.

■ McCarthyism Redivivus. Or so we are led to believe by a full page in the *National Catholic Reporter* protesting the demotion of Sister Barbara Fiand. She will be permitted to teach lay people but not seminarians at the Athenaeum in Cincinnati. The ad says she is "faithful" to the Church's teaching but has been stabbed in the back by the mongerers of rumors that she dissents on the question of women's ordination. She has been condemned without a fair hearing or the chance to confront her accusers, and so forth. In a typically McCarthyite tactic, an alert reader went to the library and consulted the chapter "Androgynous Ministry" in Sr. Barbara's book, *Releasement: Spirituality for Ministry* (Crossroad). There she writes: "In Jungian terms, our churches have lost their anima or, perhaps more correctly put, they have so repressed her that she has in many cases turned negative. . . . She holds them captive in the neurotic insecurities of legalism and protectionism that pretend to preserve values which have long lost their meaning due to the intellectual game playing and the rationalization which now surround them. The stubborn resistance to the ordination of women which uses nothing less than Scripture and tradition (misinterpreted though these may be) to justify itself, is probably the clearest example of the repressed feminine now turned sour. . . . Jung warns us, however that the animus-anima archetypal character-structure within each of us can be brought to light in a fruitful and creative way only through successful interaction with persons of the other sex. Only then can projections be recognized and withdrawn. This task will be somewhat difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish in a virtually all-male Church." If this is her position, one may wonder—I hope without animus—why she is still teaching lay people. Of course there may be another side to this, in which case we will try to fruitfully and creatively withdraw our projections, or whatever.

■ I touched here on the unseemliness of writers who, grading their betters, presume to rate popes. Typically, John XXIII is given an A+, in invidious comparison to his successors. Perhaps I verged on unseemliness myself by noting that John XXIII, undoubtedly a holy man, was very old and relatively inactive, and his brief pontificate is chiefly remembered for his calling the Second Vatican Council. A retired Benedictine abbot writes in agreement, but thinks something more should be said. "He was a man filled with the spirit and love of his Lord. He was not closed, narrow, suspicious, or ill-tempered. And the Spirit that filled him was recognized by everyone with any good will, especially the poor, the suffering, and sinners. Of course, we his fellow Christians, and especially his fellow priests, betrayed Pope John and his Council. God was very kind to take him so that he did not experience that betrayal." And then this thought about today's younger generation: "It is very sad to hear good young students for the priesthood speak of Pope John as that old man who ruined everything. Of course he did not ruin it; we did."

■ Most Jews, as more thoughtful Jews regularly lament, are emphatically on the wrong side of the abortion divide. The *Washington Times* reports on STOP (Standing Together to Oppose Partial-Birth Abortion), a group founded by Jewish women artists and literati, who have taken up the battle cry at the risk of sounding "real right wing." One Susan Roth, a publisher, was forced to realize how close to home the matter really is, remarking that "my husband was a Holocaust survivor. I know about the experiments in the concentration camps. This sounds like something Mengele would do." Sandi Merle, a lyricist and songwriter, also expresses the historical déjà vu: "If Jews go along and sanction this, we become the pharaohs who instructed the midwives, as in the days of Moses' birth, to kill unwanted children in the society. On Yom Kippur, we read the martyrology of ten rabbis who were

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murdered. I feel that as a Jew, I must not allow the world to have twelve-inch martyrs, the length of a ruler." Still, it goes against the grain of most American Jews to impede the abortion cause. Miss Merle acknowledges the tension: "Because I am a Jew, I find this must be my call. This goes against everything we've been taught all our lives. To the Democrats, I say it's more important to be on the side of God because you're a human being than to be on the side of the President because you are a Democrat." Barbara Leeden of the Independent Women's Forum and a member of STOP says, "The central fact of Judaism is social justice. In Judaism, the question of when life begins is not central." In this case, social justice begins with the question of who is included and who is excluded from our definition of society.

■ The Jesuits come in for enough criticism these days without my erroneously saying in the October 1998 issue that Judge Raymond Novak of a Pennsylvania county court was a former Jesuit priest. Judge Novak, who lectured anti-abortion protesters on the sacredness of his oath to do justice, was a priest of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The original point stands, for diocesan priests, too, are bound by solemn vows.

■ What is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander, and I'm accused of employing a double standard. There has been no mention here, it is pointed out, of "the Johnson affair." Paul Johnson is a conservative hero, and in his influential book *Intellectuals* he excoriated the personal immorality of figures such as Rousseau, Marx, and Sartre. Now it turns out that, for many years, Johnson had a mistress. Infuriated by a tribute he wrote in honor of his wife and his marriage, and believing that she was about to be rejected for a new girlfriend, she went public and gave a tabloid the tape of a conversation with Johnson in which he admits his adultery. On the tape, she attacks him for his hypocrisy as a Catholic and asks why he goes to daily Mass, to which he responds, "Because I am a sinner." That is the right answer, but no excuse for what he did. While the personal credibility of Paul Johnson has been damaged, does this discredit the argument he made in *Intellectuals* and other writings? The answer is no. The intellectuals he reproached declared a new morality by which their way of life was justified. Paul Johnson affirms the old morality by which he is judged and judges himself. He is, in short, a forgiven sinner, a species with which we are all on intimate terms.

■ We may never hear the end of it. The controversy over religious symbols at Auschwitz is heating up again. It is hard to overestimate the degree to which Poles resent the suggestion that Auschwitz and Nazism were things that they did rather than things done to them. Some aggrieved patriots have taken to planting crosses around the former death camp as a form of nationalist protest. That is wrong, but not necessarily for the reasons that some employ. Walter Reich, for instance, the former director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, writes that there should be no religious symbols of any sort, whether Christian or Jewish, at Auschwitz. "Let there be," he says, "only words of accurate history in that kingdom of boundless evil." Neither Christians nor believing Jews can accept that any evil is boundless. Not finally. The Messianic promise is that nothing is beyond redemption. The symbolic expression of hope in that promise must be undertaken with excruciating care, but the hope cannot be denied. That would be to give the last and final word to the horror.

■ In the event you thought that at least the economy is doing well, you might round out your melancholy by reading Harry Shutt's *The Trouble with Capitalism: An Enquiry into the Causes of Global Economic Failure* (St. Martin's). *Publishers Weekly* says, "Shutt's solutions posit an encompassing 'collective responsibility,' whose lack he consistently laments." If I remember, that used to be called socialism. The rave concludes, "Shutt is one of the few to expose capitalism's lies and imperfections, faults that critically threaten our democratic survival into the next century." One of the few? Woe to you, Michael Novak, when all the scribblers speak well of you.

■ When it was mentioned that Senator Daniel "Pat" Moynihan said that partial-birth abortion is "too close to infanticide," the lady on the talk show was obviously impatient. Her brisk response: "All that does is impose yet another moral judgment." I can only suppose she had in mind the Senator's assumption that there is something wrong with infanticide. The following is from the parish newsletter of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Arlington, Texas. "Dear Mom, Gosh, can you believe it's 2023 already? I'm still writing '22' on nearly everything. Seems like just yesterday I was sitting in first grade celebrating the century change. I know we haven't really chatted since Christmas. Sorry. Anyway, I have some difficult news and I really didn't want to call and talk face-to-face. Ted's had a promotion and I should be up for a hefty raise this year if I keep putting in those crazy hours. You know how I work at it. Yes, we're still struggling with the bills. Timmy's been 'okay' at kindergarten although he complains about going. But then, he wasn't happy about day care either, so what can I do? He's been a real problem, Mom. He's a good kid, but quite honestly, he's an unfair burden at this time in our lives. Ted and I have talked this through and through and finally made a choice. Plenty of other families have made it and are much better off. Our

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pastor is supportive and says hard decisions are necessary. The family is a 'system' and the demands of one member shouldn't be allowed to ruin the whole. He told us to be prayerful, consider all the factors, and do what is right to make the family work. He says that even though he probably wouldn't do it himself, the decision is really ours. He was kind enough to refer us to a children's clinic near here, so at least that part's easy. I'm not an uncaring mother. I do feel sorry for the little guy. I think he overheard Ted and me talking about 'it' the other night. I turned around and saw him standing at the bottom step in his PJ's with the little bear you gave him under his arm and his eyes sort of welling up. Mom, the way he looked at me just about broke my heart. But I honestly believe this is better for Timmy, too. It's not fair to force him to live in a family that can't give him the time and attention he deserves. And *please* don't give me the kind of grief Grandma gave you over your abortions. It is the same thing, you know. We've told him he's just going in for a vaccination. Anyway, they say it is painless. I guess it's just as well you haven't seen that much of him. Love to Dad . . . Jane."

■ Os Guinness of the Trinity Forum passes this on. In May of 1780, the Connecticut House of Representatives was in session when there was an eclipse of the sun and everything turned to darkness. Some thought the Day of Judgment had arrived and a clamor arose for an immediate adjournment. The Speaker of the House and a man of strong faith, a Colonel Davenport, rose to the occasion. "The Day of Judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles be brought." Mr. Guinness says that Trinity Forum, an evangelical education project, is trying to bring the candles. Of course, there is also the related motto of the Christophers, "It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." No doubt. But as long-term readers of this space know, I think a measured cursing of the darkness is also in order. For one thing, when candles are in short supply, it prevents us from feeling at home in the darkness.

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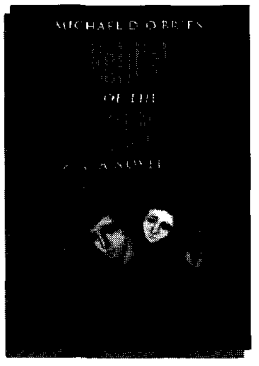

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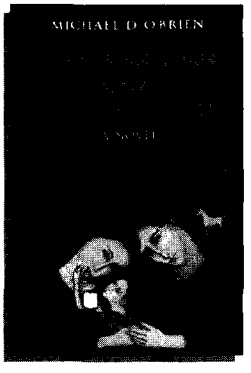

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